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The Indian Economic and Social History Review

VOL. XXVII NO. 3

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The Indian Economic and Social History Review

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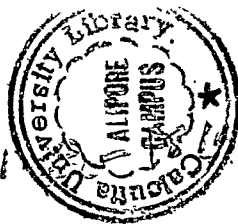
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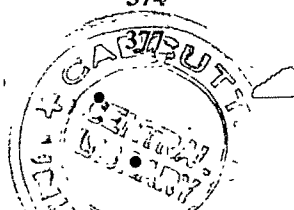
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Book Notice



The Indian Economic and Social History Review

K.P. - 1814

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This journal is indexed in **IBZ** (**I**nternational **B**ibliography of **P**eriodical **L**iterature), **IBR** (**I**nternational **B**ibliography of **B**ook **R**eviews) and in **Journal of Economic Literature**.

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Errata

Ira Klein, 'Population growth and mortality in British India, Part II: The demographic revolution,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (pp. 33-63).

We deeply regret that some serious errors crept into this article which inadvertently changed the author's meaning. These are :

1. *Page 51, lines 26-27* : These lines should read :
'proved that no more than income, nutrition, or environmental change did health policies explain the unprecedented drop of sixty per cent in mortality by World War II.'
2. *Page 55, lines 4-3 from below* : This sentence should read :
'Immunities to malaria were partial, hard won, and took long to achieve because lowly transmissible.'
3. *Page 63, line 15* : for 'lower significant fertility' read 'lower fertility significantly'.

In addition, the following typographical errors should be noted :

1. *Page 36, line 12* : for 'Pate' read 'Patel'.
2. *Page 36, line 13* : for 'Hesten' read 'Heston'.
3. *Page 36, line 33* : for 'Nutrition' read 'Nutritional'.
4. *Page 38, Table 3 (D)* : 'Flour: baked' should be deleted.
5. *Page 50, line 2* : for 'obtain in' read 'obtain it'.
6. *Page 52, line 5* : for 'transition' read 'transitions'.
7. *Page 53, line 9* : Add a close inverted comma after 'a generation'.

Disciplining and policing the 'criminals by birth', Part 2: The development of a disciplinary system, 1871–1900

Sanjay Nigam

Ramjas College
University of Delhi

The discourse on criminal tribes was affirmed in the Act of 1871, which both cast a specific 'type' and sought to mould it further by an entire apparatus of surveillance and control. That the knowledge of groups officially designated as criminal by birth, creed and caste, developed an entire apparatus of coercive and disciplinary measures—registration, roll-call, limitation on movement, the pass system, agricultural settlements, reformatory camps, workhouses, the separation of children from their parents—is a clear indication of the operation of power/knowledge, the operation of discursive practices. In other words, in the practices of segregation, exclusion and resettlement envisaged in the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, the power of colonial discourse is first confirmed by the creation of a criminal-type with which these practices were intended to deal.

Of course the Criminal Tribes Act was not the earliest of the coercive measures aimed at aggregates of individuals considered hereditary criminals; the Buddhiks, and the thugs before them, were controlled by a combination of military and disciplinary techniques. The campaigns of the Thugi and Dacoity Department, the establishment of a school of industry for thug approvers at Jabalpur and an agricultural colony at Gorakhpur for the Buddhiks were some of the early attempts to control and reshape these groups into hardworking subjects.¹ However, the systematic arrangements

¹ North Western Provinces, Police Proceedings, (Hereafter NWP, Police Progs.) 22 Sept. 1866, No. 15.

Author's Note: See Part 1: The Making of a Colonial Stereotype—The Criminal Tribes and Castes of North India. *IESHR*, 2, 1990.

for the control of groups proclaimed under the Act of 1871, marks it out from these earlier measures. The reformatory discipline now envisaged was for the first time clearly set out and put to work under the rules promulgated by the Act. The criminal tribes were thus enclosed within an extraordinary space: a network of registration, inspection, limitations on movements, passes and the roll-call had now been elaborated by the state for this very special purpose.

This is a history of surveillance of four groups—the Sanorias, Bawarias, Aherias and Harburahs—in the two decades prior to, and in the twenty years following their proclamation under the Criminal Tribes Act. The argument has been sub-divided into three sections. The first is a discussion of the rules framed under the Act—rules which gave coercive expression to the legislation. This is followed by an exploration of the antecedents to the proclamation of four groups—the Sanorias, Bawarias, Aherias and Harburahs—under the Act. The final section examines the application of the reformatory discipline to these groups between 1871 and 1895.

I

The rules drafted by the Punjab Government were regarded as more comprehensive than those by the Government of the North Western Provinces and were adopted with some modifications for the surveillance of the Bawarias of Muzaffarnagar, the Sanorias of Lalitpur and the Harburahs and Aherias of Etah.² These rules envisaged the surveillance of criminal tribes through a system of permanent registration. Once a tribe was proclaimed under the Act, a register was prepared detailing the names of all individual members of the tribe, their personal appearance, place of residence, offences committed and sentences. The register was to be supervised by the local District Magistrate who was also responsible for informing the members of the tribe of the proclamation. Notices of registration were to be posted in the villages where the tribe resided, and village headmen and chaukidars were required to inform all others.³

On registration, an individual's movements were restricted within the boundary of the village or town specified in the register. However, a pass obtained from the local police could conditionally relax this restriction. The officer in charge of the local police station could issue a pass for a period not exceeding 14 days. Such a pass would specify the period of absence sanctioned, the purpose of the leave, the territorial limits and

² Government of India, Legislative Proceedings. (Hereafter GoI, Leg. Progs.) Dec. 1873, No. 27.

³ GoI Home Dept. No. 2785, 19 Aug. 1872. GoI, Leg. Progs., Oct. 1872, No. 1.

the destination of the holder. It also designated the police stations where the holder would have to report his movements during the life of the pass.⁴

A system of roll-call was devised to enforce restrictions on movement. The roll-call was to be taken at irregular intervals by the Magistrate or his nominees. This was in addition to the daily inspection when, every evening, all those registered were to report to the village headman. The rules went on to authorise the inspection of residences of all those registered and the removal of all devices—'walls, hedges, palisades, staves, steps, ramps, stockades, trees, ditches, openings, moats'—that could help conceal stolen property or obstruct surveillance.⁵

The rules also set out the terms on which a person could be discharged from the operation of the Act: first, on grounds that such a person did not belong to a criminal tribe or caste, and second on the satisfaction of the Magistrate that he had 'for the past year been earning an honest livelihood'.⁶

These rules constituted a model of a disciplinary mechanism that sought to control and reform the criminal tribes and castes with prescriptions of order. Accordingly, since the mobility of such tribes was regarded as the basis of their criminal activities, the rules sought to restrict their mobility and consequently force them into a settled mode of life. The prescriptive function is equally evident in the rules concerning deregistration. To be discharged from the working of the Act, a registered member of a criminal tribe was required to show not only that he had given up crime but that he had a settled and honest means of livelihood. Thus the language that had been devised to explain the criminality of the criminal tribes also spelt out the terms of their reclamation. This was not lost on those who wished to legally throw off the official yoke of criminality.

We can substantiate this from a petition of deregistration. In 1935, one Laskari Dom of village Rampur in Gorakhpur was ordered to be transferred to the Salvation Army criminal tribes settlement. Laskari protested against this order arguing that the Act had been misapplied.⁷ Laskari petitioned that he was 'never a criminal nor [had] any criminal tendency in his blood due to his descent from a Pathan father'. He was therefore not a Dom, 'being a son of Chand Khan, a Pathan though through of course a Domin mother'. Further, Laskari argued that he was a 'loyal and dutiful subject of the crown and the most law abiding citizen'. As a measure of his 'loyal and dutiful' status he listed the features that made him a mistaken candidate for the application of the Act: he owned a house valued at Rs. 2000 in Rampur;

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Copy of Memorial dated 30 Sept. 1935, submitted by Laskari Dom of village Rampur, Police Stn. and Post Office Padruana, district Gorakhpur to H.E. the Gov. UP. File 169, Dept XX, 1935-38, District Records Office, Gorakhpur. I am much obliged to Shahid Amin for showing me his notes on Laskari Dom.

he was a tenant of the Raja of Padrauna; he cultivated sugarcane which he supplied on contract to the Padrauna Sugar Mills; he was a trader in bricks and had a number of kilns in village Padrauna; he was a moneylender and had lent Rs. 1000 on the basis of *bahai* accounts and hand notes.⁸ It matters little that Laskari's petition was a litany of falsehoods. What is at issue are the terms within which Laskari Dom sought his discharge from the operation of the Act. And here we find that Laskari had identified the principle of 'blood' and that of 'a law-abiding citizen' as the key to deregistration.

II

Although only four groups—Sanorias, Bawarias, Aherias and Harburahs—were brought under the act between 1871 and 1885, in his draft bill, F.O. Mayne had recommended that 29 tribes ought to be proclaimed under it.⁹ In 1868 the Inspector General of Police, Captain Dannehy, listed 20 tribes whom he considered criminal by birth. By 1873, the number of such criminal tribes had been reduced to 15. Even so, to register them all would have meant that some 60,000 people would have to be brought under the Act. Such numbers presented the government with intractable problems: the Annual Administration Report for 1873 opined that the exercise of surveillance over such large numbers dispersed across the province 'would not only tax the resources of the local authorities ... but those of the Empire'.¹⁰ Besides, it was evident that not all the members of the 15 tribes were criminal. The Gujars of Meerut for example, were predominantly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, and it was generally accepted that 'many thousands belonging to these [15] tribes have ostensible means of livelihood'.¹¹ Thus even before formal proclamations were made under the Criminal Tribes Act, it was being admitted by local officers that the principle of heredity was discrepant with existing reality: all members of a particular caste could not be regarded as criminal and if this was done there would, in fact, be no practical way of exercising surveillance over them. Initially, therefore, only four groups in three districts were brought under the Act.

The Delhiwal Bawarias, one of the four tribes brought under the Act, had first attracted the attention of the government in the 1850s. In 1855 following numerous robberies in Kanpur and Allahabad which were traced to the Bawarias, Seikh Khairuddin Ahmad, the tehsildar of pargana Bitur, was appointed to report on the Bawarias. Ahmad's investigations revealed

⁸ From Collector Gorakhpur to DIG, CID, 14 May 1935. File 169, Dept XX, 1935-38, District Records Office, Gorakhpur.

⁹ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 57.

¹⁰ Para 56, Annual Administration Report, 1873, North Western Provinces, and Oudh Judicial (Criminal) Proceedings (Hereafter NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs.), July 1876.

¹¹ From IGP to Sec. to Govt. NWP, No. 2298A, 26 July 1876, *ibid*.

that the Bawarias and the local landowners of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts were bound together in a commerce of common interests.¹² The Bawarias lived under the protection of the landowners; their families were looked after and provided for when the men had left the villages in search of plunder, their excursions sometimes taking them as far as Indore and Calcutta. The landholders even advanced loans for such trips, stood security for good behaviour and in return received the spoils from the Bawarias expeditions.¹³ These expeditions usually began after the rains, in September, and the Bawarias returned home the following April or May, at the onset of summer. Their targets were usually carts and tents, and their forays, so Ahmad concluded, were entirely free of violence. On their return, the Bawarias sold the stolen articles to their patrons, the landholders and moneylenders, at a tenth of their value. From this amount deductions were made for advances to their families and the Bawarias were left with 'merely their bare subsistence'. The visible signs of this unequal exchange between the Bawarias and the *saheb-i-zamin* were to be found in their respective dwellings. Ahmad found that there was 'nothing in their huts only rags, they live in a most abject state of misery the walls of their huts are no more than three feet high ... and the thatched roofs are very badly constructed'.¹⁴ On the other hand the landholders who dealt with the Bawarias profited conspicuously from this traffic. H.G. Kenne, the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, observed that the 'landholders who harbour the Bawarias show signs of increased wealth ... building brick houses'.¹⁵ Ahmad's interviews with individual Bawarias revealed that if they returned without sufficient booty, they were threatened with arrest and expulsion unless they immediately left on another expedition.¹⁶

Initially the measures to control the Bawarias were limited to 'harassing and hounding' them wherever they were found. In the 1850s the Commissioner of the Meerut division pursued 'an almost indefinite course of molestation to force the Bawarias to an honest living'.¹⁷ But their expeditions were little affected because of the protection they received from the landholders and the local police. Naseebah, one of the Bawarias examined by Ahmad revealed that the Magistrate's inquiries were always frustrated by

¹² A Report on the Robberies of the Boureeah tribe, inhabitants of Pergunnahs Khandlah, Jinghanah and Bidowlee, in zillah Moozuffurnuggur, by Seikh Khair-ood-deen Ahmud, Tehseeldar and Deputy Magistrate of Pergunnah Bithoor, zillah Cawnpore, Official Publications Selection from Records [Hereafter OPSR] No. XXIII, Art. II, 16: Boureeah Gang Papers.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid; *saheb-i-zamin* is not a technical term, it is used here to connote respectability as against the disrepute of the Bawarias

¹⁵ OPSR, Art. II, No. 5 (emphasis added)

¹⁶ Deposition of Naseebah taken on 30 Jan. 1855., loc. cit., OPSR, Art. II, No. 16.

¹⁷ OPSR, Art. II, No. 2.

the thanadar who 'reports us [Bawarias] as good honest cultivators'.¹⁸ Ahmad's revelations led to the conviction of 14 zamindars and 7 mahajans in 1855. Ahmad recommended that the Bawarias be isolated in a settlement near the Ganges Canal or on the Dehradun hills, supervised by the police and backed up by a system of roll-call and passes. His recommendations were considered expensive and rejected.¹⁹ Whatever the measures used to control the Bawarias, they were stymied during 1857, and much of the Bauriah record was destroyed. The inquiry was resumed in 1863 by Major Tyrwhitt.²⁰

For Major Tyrwhitt the Bawarias' relationship with the local landed classes was the most formidable hurdle to their effective control. He likened them to a marauding militia that '... themselves reap no benefit'. Though their families were looked after and protected, the zamindars took such a large proportion of their spoils 'that but little is left for them to live upon'. Following Khairuddin Ahmad, Tyrwhitt also underlined the coercive element in the landholders' support for such expeditions. Often the Bawarias on returning from their winter expedition, were forced by the *lambardars* to make another trip, and 'if not willing ... [were] compelled to do so by threats of bringing the police upon them'.²¹

These two accounts separated by almost a decade came to identical conclusions: the Bawarias gained little from the proceeds of plunder, most of which was appropriated by landlords, moneylenders and the local police. Yet when Palmer, the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, recommended the Bawarias for proclamation, he did so in the language of the Criminal Tribes Act. Palmer referred to the two reports as having provided,

a sufficient and not indistinct picture of the characteristic habits of this tribe, and the conditions under which their natural aptitude for thieving has been fostered until the practice of it has become ingrained into their daily life as to assume the features of a hereditary and criminal profession.

Though the language derived from local knowledge is veiled by the dominant discourse on criminal tribes, the tension between these two is manifest in Palmer's recommendations as the tone of his report slides between outright condemnation and respect for the Bawarias. It is worth quoting the report at some length to bring out the confusion in the official's mind: on the one

¹⁸ Deposition of Naseebah, loc. cit.

¹⁹ OPSR, Art. II, No. 16.

²⁰ GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119.

²¹ Tyrwhitt's report differs sufficiently in detail from Ahmad's to indicate that the former's observations were not overtly influenced by Ahmad's investigations. Report on the Delhiwal Boureeahs by Major Tyrwhitt, No. 117, 17 March 1864, GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119.

hand the Bawarias were a criminal tribe and it therefore followed that the procedures of punishment and control ought to be applied to them. And yet the evidence before Palmer sketched a different picture: the Bawarias were oppressed by landlords into thieving expeditions, and in fact stood to gain very little from them. It was as if Palmer having decided to represent the Bawarias as a criminal tribe was constantly pulled by the weight of evidence to qualify and moderate his opinion. Palmer's report asserted that,

combining the simplicity of a Bedouin Arab with the dexterity of an English poacher and from his earliest youth taught both by precept and example to live by plunder, the Bowreeah naturally became adept in the art of thieving.... He could not relinquish it even if he could, and if he would he could not for his antecedents and his education have unfitted him for other trades; and the ... zamindar who for the sake of either profit or intrigue threw his [protection] over the Bowreeahs criminal life [and] did so with the fixed intention of utilising for his own ends the criminality of that life. So by force of circumstances generation succeeded generation in which the men were professional thieves and the women openly immoral.

Sad as the picture is, whether viewed with reference to the Bowreeahs themselves or the society in which they lived one cannot help thinking that the poor Bowreeah was in truth more deserving of reformatory discipline rather than extreme and rigorous penalties; and it cannot be doubted that the tribe is a fitting subject for the application of the Act XXVII of 1871, both for its own sake and the public at large.²²

However, the Act made no such distinction between 'reformatory discipline' and 'extreme rigours and penalties', rather it was a combination of the two that characterised the discipline envisaged by it.

The plan to relocate the Bawarias in 1863, was motivated by considerations rather different from the ones that guided Ahmad in 1855 or Palmer in 1872. The primary objective of the establishment of the Bawaria colony at Bidauli in 1863 was to play off the Bawarias against the Gujars of that region. Accordingly the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, Martin, collected the Bawarias of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur in Bidauli, as tenants of one Mehendi Hassan Khan, a retired revenue official, who was granted magisterial powers to supervise them. The pargana of Bidauli and its environs had been severely affected by cattle thefts in the 1860s. Martin held the Gujars responsible. Cattle running had dealt a death blow to agriculture in Bidauli: 'what were once smiling fields of corn have been thrown out of

²² Note on the Delhiwal Bowreeahs and the Bowreeah colony at Bidauli from the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, G. Palmer, No. 122, 28 March 1872, GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119.

cultivation ... because the Goojars found the pursuit of cattle lifting more easy than that of agriculture'.²³ The purpose of the Bawaria colony were twofold; 'since the Goojars detest and rather dread the Bauriahs ... [each] will be admirably played off against the other.... The competition is likely to be productive of immense benefit to the state, to the proprietors and to the tenants themselves'.²⁴ In addition, Martin hoped that if successful, the experiment would make the Bauriahs take to agriculture 'as a profitable means of livelihood'.²⁵

There is evidence to suggest that Martin's plan to relocate the Bawarias in Bidauli originated in fiscal calculations; in the reckoning, to use Martin's words, of the 'benefit to state'. In the early 1860s a large tract of land on both sides of the Jamuna river in Muzaffarnagar district inhabited by the Gujars was thrown out of cultivation to make room for grazing grounds. This meant a sharp decline in the agricultural revenue from the region.²⁶ It is in this light that the experiment should be viewed as should Martin's confident prediction that '... not only will wasteland be brought under the plough and thus increase the wealth of the country but two thievish classes will be reclaimed'.²⁷

By Martin's expectations the experiment succeeded at least in one respect: the land cultivated by the Gujars increased significantly between 1863 and 1872. In 1872 the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, J. Palmer, comparing the *parwaris*' returns for that year (which he considered a conservative estimate) to the figures returned in 1862 of the land under cultivation, estimated an increase of 1303 acres in 17 villages against a decrease of 434 acres in 12.²⁸

It is the second objective, the reclamation of the Bawarias as tenant cultivators, that remained unrealised. The Bidauli colony came into existence in October 1863 with 1,576 Bawarias. An advance of Rs. 3,000 was made to Mehendi Hassan Khan as a *takavi* loan for cattle and implements and a police inspector was deputed for the surveillance of the Bawarias. The first agricultural season was a poor one—the *rabi* crop failed. The Bawarias could hardly be expected to suffer their misery quietly and began absconding to escape imminent starvation. The police tracked some Bidauli Bawarias in Allahabad and some were captured from as far as Lahore. Following the

²³ Note by the Mag. Muzaffarnagar, No. 35, 22 April 1864, para. 7, GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119; see also, Elizabeth Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India*, Vol. 1, London, 1972, p. 85.

²⁴ Note by the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, No. 77, 1 Sept. 1863, para. 2, GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 120.

²⁷ Note by the Magistrate of Muzaffarnagar, No. 77, 1 Sept. 1863, para. 2, op. cit.

²⁸ Note on the Delhiwal Bowreeahs and the Bowreeah colony at Bidaulee. GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 119.

abscondings a special police force was raised from amongst the Bawarias themselves to keep a watch on the colony, and stringent roll-call regulations were made.²⁹

In 1865, Mehendi Hassan Khan persuaded the government to bring a *rajbaha* through his lands. Most of the labour in digging the canal was provided by the Bawarias for whom irrigation held the promise of successful agriculture. However, Khan's expectations and those of the Bawarias' did not coincide. The *rajbaha* quadrupled the value of his land but the Bawarias could little afford any increase. The coincidence of the government's concern for enhanced revenue and Khan's expectations of increased rent left little room for the resettlement of the Bawarias. This interpretation should not be regarded as an overworked reading of the evidence. The Deputy Superintendent of Police of Muzaffarnagar commenting on the Bidauli experiment remarked:

... the motives for the establishment of the colony [were] subsidiary to what was apparently a greater object in Mr Martin's view, viz., an improvement in the material prosperity of the land and the consequent increase of the government revenue.... This was the aspect in which the measure [of the resettlement of the Bawarias] presented itself to Mr Martin. At this time the settlement of the district was going on under Mr Martin and it is but natural to suppose that questions regarding land settlement had peculiarly strong attractions for him at the time.³⁰

Not surprisingly, once the canal had been constructed, Mehendi Hassan Khan began shifting the Bawarias on to the unirrigated tracts and settling the irrigated land with others who could cultivate cash crops and pay the higher rents now demanded.³¹ There was another irritant that added to the tension between the Bawarias and their landlords. The Bawaria police were hostile to Khan's *karindas* (bailiffs) who encouraged the Bawarias to abscond especially during the lean months. This enabled Khan to settle new tenants on the vacated plots and take a share of the Bawaria plunder in much the same way as their previous landlords.³² In 1866, the Bawarias 'smarting under a sense of injustice', did not abscond as they had done earlier, but marched into the district headquarters at Muzaffarnagar to protest to the Magistrate. It is indeed ironic that the Bawarias who were considered criminal by birth, and incapable of any other vocation but theft, should protest against Mehendi Hassan Khan for forcing them to take to thieving expeditions and for having thrown them off the land. We do not have

²⁹ GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 120.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Note on the Delhiwal Bowreeahs and the Bowreeah colony at Bidaulee, loc. cit.

details of the protest except that the 'ringleaders', 12 Bawarias in all, were arrested and the rest were sent back to Bidauli.³³

Desertions from Bidauli continued till 1870 when of the 1,676 Bawarias settled in 1863, only 704 remained; of these only 150 were male. A school for Bawaria children was established in Bidauli as it was assumed that the next generation could be reclaimed by discipline and instruction. The Bawarias agreed to send their children to school on condition that each child was given a seer of *atta*.³⁴ The agricultural experiment had been a failure; resettlement had been a peripheral concern to the calculations of the District Collector and the Bidauli landlord. Yet in the official reckoning, it was the High Court's ruling of 1869 striking down the arrest of absconding Bawarias that was responsible for the failure of the Bidauli resettlement scheme.³⁵

The failure of the Bidauli experiment should not detract from the general function of agricultural colonies in the resettlement of the criminal tribes. In this respect the agricultural settlement at Bidauli was more than an expedient response to a specific fiscal problem. It exerted a hold on official imagination because it represented in microcosm the moral social order of the peasantry—the industrious and hardworking subjects of the Raj. Prescriptive statements of the value of agricultural settlements as the appropriate path to reclamation of the criminal tribes are made repeatedly in official reports and discussions. They are inherent in a language of discipline loaded with animal-taming connotations, examples of which we have referred to earlier.³⁶ The metaphors of beasts signifying a form of disorder suggested its corrective in discipline and segregation. This segregation also inheres in the metaphor of contagion. The agricultural settlements, by implication, were the quarantine, where the criminal tribes were treated by discipline so that they would not infect the social body of the moral subject. The Bawarias were often likened to plague and the Sanorias to infectious diseases, to locusts and swarms of bees—all required to be stopped and contained. Thus the district of Aligarh was said to 'swarm' with Aherias and Harburahs which could be controlled only if they were 'hunted out'.³⁷ One could argue that this language of discipline has other didactic references to the settled peasantry as the ideal, moral subject embedded in it. These are a set of contrasts that are implied in the category criminal tribe: wild/tamed, wandering/sedentary, propertyless/small-propertyed, living on the margins of agrarian power/subjected to agrarian power and so on.

³³ Mr Myane, IGP, NWP, cited in GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 120.

³⁴ NWP, Police Progs., 18 Sept. 1869, No. 15.

³⁵ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 59.

³⁶ See Part I: 'The Making of a Colonial Stereotype—The Criminal Tribes and Castes of North India'.

³⁷ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

Accordingly, prior to the enactment of the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, agricultural resettlement was envisaged for another criminal caste: the Sanorias of Lalitpur. Captain Dannehy regarded the Sanorias as criminal 'from time immemorial'.³⁸ He recommended that they be settled on the old site of the Dudhai town, in the southern extremity of the Lalitpur district where a large tract of rich and cultivable land was available for cultivation. The tract in Lalitpur had much to recommend it; especially because following the bursting of the *bund* which contained the only source of water for irrigation, the town was deserted. Thus the site held the advantage of isolating the Sanorias, and since the dam had been repaired and the 'lake was full again; ready again to fertilise the soil', the site was appropriate for a criminal tribe settlement.³⁹

Isolating the Sanorias presented intractable problems: they were closely connected with the Tehri and Banpur *durbars* and had their protection. More important still was the fact that the Sanorias were not a caste but 'a community banded together for the purpose of theft'.⁴⁰ Captain Dannehy explained this anomaly by suggesting that the Sanorias were originally a thieving caste, "a sub-division of the Thakoor caste ... [but] in the course of the years from the fact of their always marrying in and in, and exclusively in their own tribe their numbers diminished and they recruited themselves by the purchase of children of other castes: 'Thakoors', 'Aheers', 'Kanjars', 'Telees', 'Kachees' and 'Chamars' indiscriminately".⁴¹ In 1867, following the arrest of 61 Sanorias and the confessions of one Nund Ram Baba, the leader of the group, it was confirmed that the Sanorias belonged to different castes. But Dannehy's interpretation that adoption gave the Sanorias their peculiar mixed-caste character cannot be backed up by the evidence that was subsequently collected. Of the 61 arrested, 21 were Brahmins, 3 Kshatriyas, 7 Rajputs, 6 Ahirs, 5 Nais, 3 Kachis, 10 Telis, 1 Sonar, 2 Malis, 1 Darzi and 2 Khungars.⁴² Typically, Dannehy's account denied the material and human context by obscuring the element of consciousness from the activities of the Sanorias. It oversimplified what was a complex relationship between the Tehri states and the Sanorias on the one hand and the peasantry and the Sanorias on the other. It achieved this by recourse to a constant manner of representing the criminal tribes—that they were criminal from time immemorial. This representation relied upon and in turn reinforced the colonial stereotype of the caste system as a timeless, anti-historical system and of the natives as slavishly bound to it.

Some officers regarded the Sanorias as the descendants of Thakurs;

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² NWP, Police Progs., 11 July 1868, No. 11.

others reported that they were led by Brahmins. This confusion arose precisely because the Sanorias did not belong to a single caste and because the officers were inclined to interpret social phenomena in caste terms. While some admitted that the Sanorias belonged to different castes they reconciled this with their belief that the caste system was the basis of all social organisation, by pointing to the Brahmins who were the leaders of the Sanorias. So even if it was tacitly admitted that the Sanorias were not a caste, the caste system still determined the organisation of the Sanorias. Again this cannot be sustained by the evidence for Chamars were known to be *muktars* or gang leaders. In the Tehri state, there were some 100–150 *sirgunas* and *muktars*, gang chiefs and gang leaders; more than 200 Sanorias were Brahmins and 1500 belonged to other castes. This mixed caste character of the gangs does not seem to have affected social relations: the individual members seem to have observed rules of ritual pollution in respect to food, they did not eat of the same utensils and a Brahmin cooked for the gang. But in the light of the evidence cited earlier of a gang of 60 Sanorias in which 21 were Brahmins, victuals and cooking were not the only tasks assigned to Brahmins.⁴³

The Sanorias did not belong to a single gang but to several. In 1868, 65 gangs were known to be in existence. Each gang had a *sirguna*, a chief, and was subdivided into smaller groups called *nal* with a *mukhtar* at the head of each. In the Tehri state there were three *sirgunas*. *Sirgunas* did not accompany the *nals* on their expeditions but stayed home to receive them on their return from their expeditions. While the *nals* were away the *sirguna* looked after their families, and on their return took custody of the spoils. He was responsible for converting the valuables into cash; for dividing the proceeds amongst the individual members of the *nal*, and offering to the Tehri *darbar* a valuable article such as a piece of jewellery, precious stones, a shawl or a watch.⁴⁴

Besides these occasional gifts, the Tehri *darbar* levied an annual tax on the Sanorias called the *ghurgunna*. In 1867, the *ghurgunna* collected in Tehri amounted to Rs. 8,000. The *sirgunas* collected this tax on behalf of the *darbar* and in return was remunerated with Rs. 42 annually and the grant of some land. Once a *nal*, handed over its spoils to the *sirguna*, he first converted it into cash by selling it to one or more of the seven receivers in Tehri. He would divide the proceeds amongst the members of the *nal*, retaining his own share and the share of the Tehri *darbar*.⁴⁵

In 1850, the Sanorias lived in 12 villages known as the Baragaon; six of these were in Tehri, four in Banpur and two in Dutteah. Each village had its *nals*—six to ten to each village—registered by the Tehri *darbar* at its

⁴³ Memorandum regarding Sanorias etc., NWP Police Progs., 11 July 1868, No. 11.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Sanoria *daftar*; in the 1850s Lala Kishore Kanungo maintained this office. The Lala appointed Ladlee Koonia as a *mukkaddam* to settle all disputes arising from the sharing of the spoils and to supervise the *lambardars* who had been appointed to individual villages. The *sirgunas* delivered all valuable presents and the *ghurgunna* to the *daftar* through the *mukkaddam*. On such an occasion the *sirguna* accompanied by the *lambardar* would visit the *daftar* to deliver his dues and receive his salary.⁴⁶

Individual members of the *nals* were bound by oaths and pledges to surrender the entire amount from an expedition without retaining any item for personal consumption. The Sanorias were sworn not to commit any crime other than theft: the *nals* were forbidden to steal at night; to lift cattle, to break into a house or to commit highway robberies. Most reports suggest that petty theft was the most frequent crime committed by the Sanorias.⁴⁷

An instance of one such typical theft was reported in 1868. Once a *nal* reached the outskirts of a town it divided into smaller groups of 3 to 5 persons. One group, comprised of say two adult males and a child of 8–10 years. One of the adults, dressed as a man of wealth and status, engaged a shopkeeper in conversation showing an interest in his wares, while the other adult directed the child by signs to approach the shop, and pick up an item which the 'client' had chosen. If the child was successful they would rejoin the others, and perhaps repeat the ploy on some other unsuspecting shopkeeper. But should the child be caught in the act, the 'client' would plead with the shopkeeper on the child's behalf and even strike the boy a couple of times. This was the signal for the other Sanorias to intercede. He would admonish the 'client' for striking the child, and in the melee the child would slip away. The child's parents were usually paid a fee ranging between Rs. 5 and 50 for the hire of a *chabah*, a child trainee. The first success of a child was an occasion for celebration. If the child was caught and beaten but refused to reveal the gang's identity there would be greater cause for celebration.⁴⁸

Despite appearances—the rules governing the conduct of the Sanorias and the initiation of children—the Sanorias were not a closed 'brotherhood', a word repeatedly used to describe them in official communications. Individuals could join a *nal* for a particular expedition without any obligation of doing so again. In 1851, Major Harris reported that after a date had been set for an expedition, 'an invitation is given to all stragglers who do not belong to any particular [Sanoria] village or gang to join in the distant expedition'.⁴⁹ Members of the *nals* usually had land in villages and usually

⁴⁶ Reports of the *Oothaegeeras* or the *Sunoreahs* of the Tehree, Dutteah, Shahgurb and Chundeyree, or Banpoor states. GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁴⁷ Memorandum regarding Sanorias etc., loc. cit.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Reports on '*Oothaegeeras*' or the *Sunoreahs* etc., loc. cit.

returned to cultivation after an expedition. The expeditions usually began after the *dasheera* festival in October-November, after the *rabi* sowing had been completed. If the expedition was successful the *nal* returned in time for the sowing of the *kharif* crop.⁵⁰ However, if they went on a distant expedition they could stay away for as long as two years. During such an absence the local *mahajan* advanced credit to the families left behind, in the expectation of some jewellery or gold coins which were adjusted against the loans at half or a third of their value, when the *nal* returned.⁵¹

The territories of Tehri, Banpur and Lalitpur were safe from the Sanorias as their targets were in distant territories—Hyderabad, Bombay and Bengal. Even there they were connected with local denominations of power. For instance the Raja of Burdwan in Bengal admitted the Sanorias into his *sarai* which the Sanorias called a *chounee* or a refuge. Here they were provided with food and shelter. At Lal Gola, a few miles north of Murshidabad, the Sanorias had the use of another *chounee* from where they preyed on the *Megh Murd* fair held at Dinatpur in Rangapur district. In return for the protection, the Sanorias disposed of their spoils at half or a third of its value in Lal Gola before returning home. Lal Gola was thus assured that the Sanorias would not thief in its environs and it also benefited from the terms of the Sanorias trade. A similar calculation would have moved the Burdwan Raja into admitting the Sanorias. Similarly in the city of Rajmahal the Sanorias formed a *chounee* in the *muhalla* of one Tewari Pardesi, whose ancestors had belonged to Tehri. Not only Tewari but all the residents of that locality in Rajmahal profited from the presence of the Sanorias: 'not only does Tewari purchase all their spoils', observed Major Harris, 'but there is not a resident in the muhalla, be he Bunneah or be he Musalman, that does not purchase from them! A nest of receivers of stolen goods!'⁵² Other Sanoria *chounees* were located in villages near Jabalpur and Ahmedabad.⁵³

As long as the Sanorias had the protection of the Tehri and Banpur states there was little that could be done to control them. The frustrations of the British government in dealing with them is reminiscent of the disappointment with the Buddhuks and their patrons, the taluqdars of Awadh. Tehri and Banpur, however, did not consider their relations with the Sanorias as dishonourable or morally reprehensible. On the contrary, the Raja of Banpur claimed to have descended from robber bands and did not shy away from admitting his *darbar's* collusion with the Sanorias. He admitted that,

from former time these people have resided in my territory and in the

⁵⁰ Ibid., para. 14.

⁵¹ Ibid., para. 20.

⁵² Ibid., paras. 26, 27 and 28.

⁵³ Ibid., paras. 29 and 30.

states of other princes; proceeding to distant districts, to follow their occupation, robbing by day for a livelihood for themselves and for their families.... In consequence of these people stealing by day only and that they do not take life or distress any person by personal illwage and they do not break into houses by digging walls or breaking door locks, but simply by their smartness manage to abstract property; owing to such trifling thefts, I looked on their proceedings as petty thefts, and have not interfered with them.⁵⁴

The relations between the Banpur and Tehri states and the Sanorias was further proof of the 'otherness' of India. The British Agent looked upon the Raja's explanation of his relations with the Sanorias as an indication of the depraved foundations of native chiefdoms:

the connection of the Government of these states with professional thieves and vagabonds is an apt commentary on the morals of the Boondela Princes and principalities. They are the offsprings of plunderers and have never known laws or national obligations and restraints, till their relations with the British power brought them into contact with the European civilization and manners.⁵⁵

But the states of Banpur and Tehri had solid reason for patronising the Sanorias: the tax collected from the Sanorias was a vital part of the revenue of these states as is evident from the collection of Rs. 8,000 in 1851 from seven villages in Tehri.⁵⁶ For the Raja, long residence, activities in distant territories, stealing by day and not taking life were the characteristic features of the 'trifling thefts' of the Sanorias which called for profitable management rather than extermination. The colonial state, on the contrary, had several reasons to destroy the Sanorias. Other than posing a danger to the safe transfer of revenue and the security of communications and trade routes the Sanorias posed a challenge to the symbolic authority of the Raj both in distant Bengal and in the nearby central Indian states. In this instance the Sanorias were understood in terms of predatory state formations; their surveillance therefore required that the Tehri and Banpur states sever all communications with them. Thus the authority of the Raj was affirmed when the two states agreed to surrender their dealings with the Sanorias to the directions of the Supreme Government. 'Communicate your directions and hereafter there shall not be the slightest deviation from your instructions',

⁵⁴ Translation of Khureeta from the Raja of Banpoor, GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁵⁵ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁵⁶ Reports of the *Oothaegeeras* etc., loc. cit.

wrote the Raja of Banpur in a formal renunciation of his dealings with the Sanorias.⁵⁷

G.A. Bushby, the agent of the Governor General in Gwalior, recommended that the states of Tehri and Banpur be fined Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 1,000 respectively for harbouring the Sanorias and for having caused harm to British subjects. He also suggested that the other states known to patronise the Sanorias should have 'a severe lecture read to them'.⁵⁸ Isolating the Sanorias from their patrons was seen as the necessary precondition to controlling them.⁵⁹ Recommendations were made to identify the receivers of stolen property in Bengal with a view to destroying the trade that afforded the Sanorias protection in distant territories. Efforts were also made to recruit spies and informers from amongst them in order to monitor their movements.⁶⁰ An inspector was appointed to supervise the Sanorias and a police outpost was established at Bir. Restrictions on their movements were imposed under Police Circular 7, by which Sanorias absent from their homes could be convicted for bad livelihood under section 401 of the Indian Penal Code. But the Inspector General of Police considered these measures insufficient.⁶¹ It is in this context that the attraction of an isolated agricultural colony for the discipline and control of the Sanorias becomes clear. However, Captain Dannehy's plan to resettle the Sanorias on the old site of the Doodhai town was criticised by the Commissioner of Jhansi. He argued that the Sanorias were 'not a wandering tribe whose thieving propensities [could] be cured by giving it local habitation — it has that already'.⁶²

Following the enactment of the Criminal Tribes Act the government of the North Western Provinces recommended in 1873 that the Sanorias could 'earn an honest living in the 21 villages in Lalitpur'.⁶³ Given that the Tehri *darbar* was assisting the British compile a record of the Sanorias and had agreed to sever all connections with them, a separate agricultural colony was not envisaged for the resettlement of the Sanorias.⁶⁴ Moreover, the rules framed under the Act were considered adequate for disciplining the Sanorias. Thus the Sanorias in 21 villages of Lalitpur numbering 214 males were brought under the Criminal Tribes Act in 1874.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Translation of Khureeta from the Raja of Banpoor, 22 Nov. 1850, loc. cit.

⁵⁸ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁵⁹ Extract from the Annual Police Report, 1867, para. 15, GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁶⁰ Report on the Police Administration of the NWP for 1867, Appendix C, NWP, Police Progs., 25 July 1868, No. 19.

⁶¹ NWP, Police Progs., 11 July 1868, No. 28.

⁶² Extract from Annual Police Report by the Comm. of Jhansi for 1865, para. 5, GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁶³ GoI, Leg. Progs., Dec. 1873, No. 27.

⁶⁴ NWP, Police Progs., 11 July 1868, No. 13.

⁶⁵ Notification No. 488A, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., March 1874.

Besides the Sanorias and the Bawarias, the Aherias and Harburahs of Etah district were brought under the Criminal Tribes Act, soon after it was enacted.⁶⁶ The Bawarias, Aherias and Harburahs were brought under the operation of the Act in 1873 and the Sanorias the following year. 211 male Aherias and 36 male Harburahs were registered in 12 and 4 villages respectively. Captain Dannehy, had distinguished between the Aherias and Harburahs: the former were petty cultivators while the latter were solely engaged in crime. However there is evidence to suggest that both these groups were small peasants engaged in cultivation and agricultural labour. It is difficult to estimate the significance of their holdings or their work as labourers as police reports are often conflicting on this score. Some reports claimed that both Aherias and Harburahs practised agriculture as a cover to their thieving expeditions.⁶⁷ Other accounts took a larger view and suggested that the Harburahs were settled on poor and marginal tracts by the landholders who shared in their booty.⁶⁸ Landholders discouraged the Harburahs from cultivating their plots by denying them access to irrigation facilities till they were entirely dependent on thieving raids on neighbouring districts much to the satisfaction of the landholders who received a large proportion of their tenants' exertions.⁶⁹

Like the Bawarias and the Sanorias, the Aherias and Harburahs were mainly involved in small thefts. They preyed upon pilgrims and travellers, whose tents and camping sites were the targets of their thefts. Like the other two, they avoided violent situations but unlike the others who did not steal at night, their predatory missions, given that their quarries were travellers and their camps, were usually nocturnal. Harburah women usually posing as beggars would collect information about a travelling party during the day and then the menfolk would break into the camp at night. These breaks were usually made on moonless nights when a group of Harburahs disguised as dogs or jackals would encircle the camp. The disguise consisted of a stick secured along the back of an individual's body with a cowhide or an animal skin draped over it to give the appearance of an animal. The stick kept the hide in place and protected the Harburah from an unexpected blow to the back. The Harburahs would then distract the attention of the guard by uncanny imitations of the calls of jackals and hyenas, while those disguised crept into the site. They usually cut open the sides of tents and carts with a sharp knife, and after selecting a few articles they would flee with articles secured to the chest or held in their mouth. So adept were the Harburahs at disguising themselves that one police officer observed that the Harburahs could

⁶⁶ Notification No. 1752A, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Oct. 1873.

⁶⁷ GoI, Leg. Progs., 1871. No. 73.

⁶⁸ NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1873, No. 15.

⁶⁹ Extract from a Report by Inspector Ibrahim Beg, Census of Harburahs in the NWP and Oudh, Pt. III, List 57, Home Police, (A) Box 5, File 593, Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow.

run on all fours with incredible speed and endurance, and so complete was their disguise that in the uncertain light of a moonless night a harburah would be mistaken even by a person previously warned, for the animal he intended to represent.⁷⁰

Prior to the Act of 1871, efforts to control the Aherias and Harburahs fell short of their objective. The police installed in Etah to control them and report their absences were easily corrupted. The landholders could hardly be expected to live up to their pledges of disassociating themselves from such a rich source of income. In 1865, the Magistrate of Aligarh recommended that the Harburahs be segregated from the landlords, and their movements be restricted: 'the more stationary the nomad classes, the better they can be expected to be looked after'.⁷¹

III

With the legislation of the Criminal Tribes Act, the procedures of control and surveillance were systematised. This transition was from the haphazard methods of 'hounding and pursuing' to instituting a system of surveillance with a view to changing and controlling every aspect of the 'tribes' existence. The Act can therefore be seen as combining both punishment and the objective of that punishment. This section examines the working of the Act between 1871 and 1895 to control the Bawarias, Sanorias, Aherias and Harburahs: it describes the expectations of the British government and the role of the landed classes in the control and resettlement of the criminal tribes.

The vision that the landholders were prepared to reclaim the criminal tribes could not be realised. This delusion had two sources: first, as discussed already, there was no precise legislated definition of the police responsibility of the landholders; colonial relations of power specified that the crimes of the criminal tribes and the illegalities of the landed classes would be administered differently.⁷² Secondly, this failure had its origins in the complex relationship between landholders and the criminal tribes.

One point of departure in understanding the relationship is the peasant origins of the criminal tribes. Yet this is persistently obscured by the official discourse that represented the criminality of the 'tribes' as an inherent characteristic sharply distinguishing them from the rest of the population, be they lords or peasants. However, the peasant background of the groups considered criminal by birth, is repeatedly emphasised in official and non-official writings. For instance, Sleeman's writings on the Buddhaks

⁷⁰ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁷¹ GoI, Leg. Progs., Nov. 1871, No. 73.

⁷² See Part 1: 'The Making of a Colonial Stereotype—The Criminal Tribes and Castes of North India'.

and the thugs show, not only that these groups were drawn from the peasantry, but that they maintained their links with their communities by either cultivating land themselves or by depending on the protection and support of their villages.⁷³ In some instances the element of coercion was the dominant feature of the relationship between landholder and criminal tribe; such was the relationship between the Bawarias of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur and the landlords of those districts. In other cases the criminal tribes were not manipulated and coerced into crime. With the Sanorias of Tehri, Banpur and Lalitpur we have an example where the illegalities of the state and peasant groups converged. Thus the groups brought under the Criminal Tribes Act should not be regarded as if they had uniform and regular characteristics or as if some abstract set of rules governed their relations with the rest of society.

Even before the proclamation of the Bawarias of Muzaffarnagar, local officials had advised moving them to an alternative site. They were seen as being 'entirely at the mercy of Munde Hussan'. The Bawarias had made an effort of settling down in Bidauli; they had brought uncultivated land under the plough and for the first two years they did not leave Bidauli on thieving expeditions. But the landholder, Mehendi Hassan, 'oppress[ed] those who [tried] by culture and care to make their land productive'. As soon as uncultivated tracts were broken up by Bawaria cultivators, Mehendi Hassan would jack up the rents and let out the plots to other tenants.⁷⁴ Thus Mehendi Hassan by having the Bawarias located on his lands gained in four different ways: first by having a canal cut through his land—almost entirely by Bawaria labour—he increased the rental value of his lands; second, making the Bawarias break-up uncultivated tracts; third, by letting out these new plots at high rents to better tenants; and fourth by squeezing the Bawarias on to poor tracts, he forced them to give up agriculture and leave Bidauli on thieving expeditions. He thus reproduced the relations that had existed between the Bawarias and their landlords at their previous site. Commenting on this relationship the Inspector General of Police, Carmichael remarked, 'He is shrewdly suspected of making the Bowreeahs give him a share of their plunder whenever they return from their marauding expeditions'.⁷⁵

The recommendation to shift the Bawarias to a different site was not accepted, and the Bawarias were proclaimed in 1873.⁷⁶ The objective of the proclamation was 'not to attempt to establish a reformatory, but to compel

⁷³ For a detailed discussion see Sanjay Nigam, 'A Social History of a Colonial Stereotype. The Criminal Tribes and Castes of Uttar Pradesh, 1871-1947', unpublished Ph. D thesis, University of London, 1987.

⁷⁴ *GoI, Leg. Progs.*, July 1872, No. 117.

⁷⁵ *NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs.*, May 1873.

⁷⁶ *NWP Jud. (Cr.) Progs.*, June 1873.

the tribe by a system of registration and roll-calls not to wander without permission, and to pursue heartily the occupation they nominally follow'.⁷⁷ Since their settlement in Bidauli, a large number of Bawarias had absconded: of the 1,676 Bawarias that had been settled in Bidauli in 1863, only 846 remained to be registered under the Act, in June 1873. During the first year of its operation, the pass regulation had little effect on the Bawarias; 75 left Bidauli without passes, 129 returned from earlier desertions and imprisonments; a further 21 deaths and 46 births put the Bawaria population at 905. Even so, 771 Bawarias had deserted the colony since its inception in 1863.⁷⁸

The surveillance of the Bawarias was organised by the establishment of a police *chauki* at Bidauli consisting of 1 subinspector, 2 head-constables, 7 chaukidars and 3 Bawaria informers. Each morning the chaukidars arrived at the Bawaria villages for an informal inspection. These inspections served to remind the Bawarias of the presence of the chaukidars who remained with the Bawarias till noon. In the evening before sunset, after the Bawarias had returned from their fields they were assembled for a head count. The roll-call was formally taken two or three times a week at irregular intervals by the subinspector or the head-constables. The headman of each family was responsible for his household's presence at the roll-call. Each Bawaria was expected to answer by name at the roll-call, and all absentees were to be reported to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent made frequent visits and the Magistrate visited Bidauli a few times in the course of the year.⁷⁹ Thus the reformatory discipline was distributed across various levels of surveillance: first, the individual answering to his name at the roll-call; then the head of the family, the informers, the chaukidars, the village headmen, who watched, counted, reported at periodic intervals; and finally the District Superintendent who maintained the Bawaria register and the Magistrate who supervised the whole project.

Despite the abscondings, district officers were optimistic about the Bawarias; they seemed to be actively involved in agriculture, more than 115 Bawarias had returned to the colony, and punishments had been few.⁸⁰

This initial optimism was overshadowed by a sense of frustration with the working of the Act; by 1878, the failure of the Bidauli project was evident. The roll-call and the pass regulation seem to have had little effect on the movements of the Bawarias who 'come and go as they like'.⁸¹ In 1878, 115 Bawarias absconded and the total population shrank to 884.⁸² Two

⁷⁷ GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 116.

⁷⁸ NWP Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

⁷⁹ GoI, Leg. Progs., July 1872, No. 118.

⁸⁰ No. 641C, 1 July 1875, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

⁸¹ No. 2133A, 27 Sept. 1878, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Dec. 1878.

⁸² Statement Showing the Criminal Tribes Proclaimed under Act XXVII of 1871, 31 March, as returned by District Officers, NWP, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Dec. 1878.

contradictory explanations of this failure can be recovered from the official reports. The first extended the knowledge of the criminal tribes to explain the causes of this failure; thus its essential didactic quality cannot be detached from the rest of its existence. Accordingly, the Inspector General of Police, Tyrwhitt claimed that the 'hard fare of the village ryots, coarse bread and dal (did not suit the Bawarias' taste) for the luxuries of life ... (that) they have for centuries obtained by theft ...' It followed that the criminal tribes would abscond to 'obtain by plunder what they would not attempt to do by the sweat of their brow'.⁸³ But district officials painted a different picture. They argued that the inability of the Bawarias to hold their plots in face of Mehendi Hassan's machinations was the main reason why they gave up agriculture and absconded. In November 1877, Elliot Colvin the Commissioner of Meerut visited Bidauli. He reported that the Bawarias could not be expected to break up new land and settle down as honest peasants if they knew that at the end of each year they were 'not only liable to ejectment but knew ... they would be dispossessed'. Mehendi Hassan had refused to allow the Bawarias any security of tenure whatsoever. He told Colvin that he would give up the canal water rather than allow the Bawarias occupancy rights. Colvin concluded that for Mehendi Hassan the Bawarias 'are to be used as pioneers or rather cat's-paws to break up the jungle lands, they are not to be allowed to attach themselves to the soil and full use is to be made of the power of shifting their holdings'.⁸⁴

By 1878, 730 of the original 1,676 Bawarias remained in Bidauli. Colvin suggested that they should be collected into 2 villages Jinjhara and Singhara in the Bidauli pargana; a tract which the canal cut through. These villages, he recommended, should be acquired for Rs. 20,000 from Mehendi Hassan; this would rid the Bawarias of his pernicious influence.⁸⁵ The Government of India, however, was not enthusiastic about this proposal as it 'interfered with the principle of competition'. Instead it suggested that the Bawarias be dispersed to the villages from where they had been brought to Bidauli in 1863.⁸⁶

The refusal of the government to acquire the two villages of Mehendi Hassan Khan, should not be taken to mean that the colonial state played the role of a neutral ombudsman; it is suggestive rather of the contradiction in the strategy of reclamation through agricultural resettlement. The choice of Bidauli as a Bawaria settlement, was motivated by a host of considerations among which 'peasantisation' of the Bawarias was just one: the Gujars

⁸³ No. 2133A, loc. cit.

⁸⁴ No. 19, 31 Jan. 1878, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., April 1879.

⁸⁵ From W.C. Plowden, Comm. Meerut Div. to the Sec. to Govt. NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., April 1879.

⁸⁶ From C. Brenard, Offg. Sec. to the Govt. of India, Home Dept. (Judicial), to Sec. to Govt. NWPO, No. 597, 22 May 1879; From Sec. to Govt. NWPO, to Comm. Meerut Div. No. 796, 5 June 1879, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., June, 1879.

had to be subdued, grazing land brought back under the plough, and the Bawarias had to be induced to settle down as full-fledged *kisans*. However, the introduction of the principle of competition, the coercive and legal backing that the landholders had from the law to increase rent, to restrict occupancy tenures and to eject tenants, meant that in the person of Mehendi Hassan the colonial state confronted its own creation. The state needed the support of the landlords to subsume the criminal type into an honest peasant, a service not always performed to the satisfaction either of the agent or the object of this disciplining. Consequently while the agricultural settlements languished, the apparatus of surveillance grew, to assist in this process of peasantisation.

Perhaps the term 'confront' is inappropriate. For after all Khan was not disciplined for reneging on his agreements and neither were the water resources restricted as some officers had threatened. Perhaps failure is an equally inappropriate characterisation of the Bidauli project. If registration and the restrictions on the movements are taken together with the government's reluctance to resettle the Bawarias on Mehendi Hassan's lands, it seems that the idea was to draw the disobedient criminal types into accepting obedience, poverty and industriousness. Such an interpretation seems possible especially in the light of the remarks of certain officials who blamed the 'failure' on the lack of industriousness of the Bawarias ('they can obtain by plunder what they will not by the sweat of their brow'), on their lack of obedience ('they have for centuries obtained [luxuries] by theft') and on their rejection of poverty ('the criminal tribes are not content to live on the hard fare of the village ryots').

The Sanorias of Lalitpur were brought under the Criminal Tribes Act in March 1874. By this proclamation, 154 male Sanorias were registered in 21 villages.⁸⁷ No special police force was stationed to oversee the Sanorias. This was mainly because the organisation of police surveillance in 21 villages involved considerable expense. Even the monthly expense of Rs. 258 for maintaining a police force in Bidauli had been considered excessive.⁸⁸ The registered Sanorias were required to present themselves every morning at their respective police stations; the women were not allowed to stay away from their villages overnight and some Sanorias were recruited as spies.

However, if fiscal considerations discouraged the establishment of a special surveillance-police, this absence involved political costs. For one, the requirement that the Sanorias present themselves for a roll-call each morning at local police stations meant that precious hours were lost and individuals could begin work on their plots only at midday. Also, punishing women for

⁸⁷ Notification No. 488A; Judicial (Cr.) Dept., 19 March 1874, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., June 1873.

⁸⁸ From Offg. Sec. to Govt. NWP, to IGP, No. 499A, 17 July 1876, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

overstaying their leave was a source of harassment.⁸⁹ But most galling of all was the system of passes. The absence of a special police force meant that rather than applying for a pass to the Deputy Superintendent of Police and wait for its issue, the Sanorias, who often needed to visit their relations in Tehri, simply absconded. Once they had left their designated village without a proper pass, they dared not return to Lalitpur, fearing arrest and punishment. They usually joined their relations in a thieving expedition from Tehri, preferring to risk an arrest for thieving rather than returning to Lalitpur to be arrested for breach of the pass rules.⁹⁰ In the absence of a local apparatus of surveillance, the controls envisaged in the rules remained imperfect. On the one hand the absence of the chaukidars and local policemen meant that the Sanorias were hardly aware that their activities were under constant inspection. On the other hand, the roll-call which cost them crucial hours of work, and the pass system that forced them to abscond, went against the very objective of surveillance, viz., control of movement and resettlement.

Not surprisingly therefore, the Sanorias began absconding from their villages. In 1877, only 100 of the 154 registered remained. This phenomenon was explained by officials in the same terms as had been used to account for the Bawaria abscondings. The criminal tribes, it was argued shared a collective 'distaste for the hard and uncertain nature of agricultural toil'; they were 'not content with the poor fare of the village cultivators'; more, "they would always ... find means to leave their homes on plundering expeditions which ... they infinitely prefer to the tame and depressing labour of field tillage".⁹¹ The inherent criminality of the Sanorias remained an explanation for all phenomena, it was the reason used for the deployment of special measures of surveillance and was equally an explanation of why these measures remained ineffective.

However, the Sanorias presented the officers with a dilemma, for although they were referred to as a caste, the Sanorias came from various castes: "The Sanorias are not a tribe with whom the practice of thieving is a hereditary occupation but [according to the Government of India] "an organised fraternity of vagrant thieves".⁹² Consequently local officers considered it wrong to impose restrictions on the movements of Sanoria women and children.⁹³ Some attempts were also made to improve the system of passes to prevent the Sanorias from absconding and proposals were made to simplify the procedures of issuing passes.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ From DIGP, NWPO to IGP, No. 641C, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

⁹⁰ From Major J. Liston, Dy. Comm., Jhansi Division, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., May 1879.

⁹¹ No. 2133A, 27 Sept. 1878; No. 1702A, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Dec. 1878.

⁹² From J.W. Quinton, Offg. Comm. Jhansi Div. to IGP, NWPO, No. 339, Jhansi, 27 Feb. 1879, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., March 1879.

⁹³ No. 373, 21 Dec. 1878, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., May 1879.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Behind these readjustments there seems to have been a calculation of balance between repression and leniency. If the restrictions—such as roll-call and passes—appeared too repressive there was always the fear that the Sanorias would disappear into the states of Tehri and Banpur.⁹⁵ But if the instruments of surveillance were absent or not visible then there was the risk of surveillance not functioning at all. To be effective surveillance had to be interiorised by the Sanorias and all those brought under the Criminal Tribes Act. And to be interiorised, surveillance had to be visible. Thus local officers stressed the urgency of establishing small police *chaukis* that could localise the surveillance of the Sanorias and regulate their lives without appearing to repress them.⁹⁶

In the absence of these readjustments, the Sanorias continued to abscond, and in 1880 their number fell to 77. In 1881 the number increased to 90 on account of 22 releases from jail, but nine Sanorias absconded that year.⁹⁷ In 1884, 13 more absconded but four were recaptured. The district police stepped up surveillance measures: roll-calls were taken more often and frequent inspections and house checks were conducted. The effect of these measures was almost immediate and district reports claimed that 'Sanaurias know that they are being watched ... and are more cautious.'⁹⁸

The Inspector General of Police endorsed the district's suggestion to improve the surveillance over the Sanorias and of taking effective steps to ensure their resettlement in agriculture. He accepted in principle that the presence of a local police force to keep a watch on the activities of the Sanorias, as also the removal of all unnecessary restrictions on Sanoria women and children was vital to the project of their reclamation. The restrictions on the movements of the members of the Sanoria families, he regarded as 'neither just nor politic'.⁹⁹ Further, he outlined a plan of reclamation which would give the Sanorias rent-free land for seven years, followed by seven years of moderate rents, and after this period regular rents would be levied. The plan also made provisions for liberal *takavi* advances. The success of this plan was clearly not calculated in economic terms but by the expectation of converting the Sanorias into hardworking peasants, solely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood or to put it more precisely in the words of the Inspector General of Police, 'If the scheme is to be a success we must not count the cost of it too closely ... the object we have in view is not to increase government revenue but to reclaim a very troublesome class of criminals.'¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ No. 641C, 1 July 1875, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ No. 1314, 23 June 1881, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Aug. 1881.

⁹⁸ No. 1659A, 20 June 1883, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1884.

⁹⁹ No. 835A, 12 Jan. 1883; No. 25, 6 Dec. 1882, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1884.

¹⁰⁰ No. 835A, 12 Jan. 1883, loc. cit.

It is interesting to note that although it was widely known that the Sanorias were not a caste, that they did not live by thieving alone, and that they were in fact peasant cultivators, yet the image of the Sanorias as a criminal tribe, born to crime and living solely by the proceeds of plunder died hard. Liston, the Deputy Commissioner of Lalitpur, following the official discourse on criminal tribes, assumed that the Sanorias lived off plunder alone.¹⁰¹ Much to his consternation, Liston realised that his opinion was ill-founded:

In my report [for] 1882, on the working of the Criminal Tribes Act I had allowed it to be a fact that these Sunoria families lived on the proceeds of their gang fellows' plundering expeditions. I did so trusting too much to the police officers' reports. Last year I made enquiries and found reason to doubt the truth of this. Now it turns out that most of these people have means of livelihood ... these people cannot be said to have no means of livelihood.¹⁰²

But even the reports which had allowed Liston to categorise the Sanorias as living off plunder had returned the land held by them, for the past five years.

Table 1

<i>Sanorias in Lalitpur</i>	1877-78	78-79	79-80	80-81	81-82
Land in Bighas		376	386	429	426
No. of families holding land	47	48	49	57	58
No. of families without land	9	22	28	33	31

Source: NWPO Jud.(Cr.) Progs., Dec. 1878, Nov. 1879, Aug. 1880, Aug. 1881, and Aug. 1882

Yet Liston had persisted in the belief that thieving was the Sanorias' only means of livelihood. In Liston's perceptions we have yet another instance of the embeddedness of the discourse on criminal tribes.

The plan, in the event of Liston's discovery, was altered and land was now offered to four families totalling 25 persons, who had no land. The grant consisting 300 acres was offered in the Bir village in the Banpur pargana. Also a grant of Rs. 727 was made for the Bir colony: Rs. 450 as a *takavi* loan for seed, cattle and agricultural implements, Rs. 250 towards a drinking water well and Rs. 28 for building houses. Liston expected that after the four families had settled down others 'will come from the thieving grounds and settle quietly down'.¹⁰³ A police *chauki* consisting of one subinspector,

¹⁰¹ No. 25, 6 Dec. 1882, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1884.

¹⁰² No. 220, 20-21 Oct. 1883, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1884.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

two constables and two chaukidars from among the Sanorias were appointed to implement the surveillance rules.

The Aherias and Harburahs were brought under the operation of the Act in 1873: the Aherias were registered in 11 villages in Etah and the Harburahs in four.¹⁰⁴ In 1874, 969 Aherias and 128 Harburahs were brought under the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act.¹⁰⁵ Although the figures returned in the reports were regarded as unreliable, it was evident that the Aherias and Harburahs began absconding as soon as they were brought under the Act. The reasons are plain. First, the local landowners seem to have been responsible for motivating these abscondings, and the Aherias and Harburahs were involved with the landed classes in a relationship not different from the Bawarias and their patrons. Evidence is limited, but to cite one example, in 1873, 63 Harburah men entered the district and were identified and put under police supervision. Almost immediately, a zamindar offered to be responsible for them. On inquiry the Magistrate discovered that he owned only 13 bighas of land and his interest in them was anything but resettlement on his land.¹⁰⁶ Second, given the fact that the district authorities 'took little interest in' the surveillance, the abscondings continued almost unchecked.¹⁰⁷ Third, the 'absolute hardship' suffered by the Aherias and Harburahs was yet another reason for fleeing the district.¹⁰⁸

No special police arrangements were made to supervise the Aherias and Harburahs and neither was a separate agricultural colony envisaged for their resettlement. The Magistrate did, however, attempt to obtain some land from the local landholders but remained suspicious of their motives.¹⁰⁹ By 1880, the population of Aherias and Harburahs had shrunk to 523 and 85 respectively. In 1880, 50 Aherias and 14 Harburahs absconded and in 1881, 45 Aherias and 3 Harburahs; 62 Aherias in 1883, and 77 Aherias in 1884 and 125 Aherias in 1885. Figures of the Harburah abscondings were not tabulated for the past few years, but abscondings continued nonetheless.

By the end of 1879, the number of Aherias and Harburahs had shrunk to 523 and 85 respectively. Without an apparatus of surveillance the application of the Act had little effect on the movements of the Aherias and Harburahs and large numbers continued to leave and return to the district every year. The following table shows that until 1882 the abscondings and returns went almost unchecked.

¹⁰⁴ Notification No. 1752A of 1873, Jud. (Cr.) Dept., 22 Oct. 1873, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Oct. 1873.

¹⁰⁵ Statement showing the state of several criminal tribes proclaimed under Act XXVII, 1871 on 31 Dec. 1874, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

¹⁰⁶ No. 67, 4 June 1873, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., 1873.

¹⁰⁷ No. 2133A, 27 Sept. 1878, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., 1878.

¹⁰⁸ No. 430C-A, 22 July 1879, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Nov. 1879.

¹⁰⁹ No. 614C, 1 July 1875, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., July 1876.

Table 2

<i>Ahirs and Harburahs in Etah</i>	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885
Numbers absconding	64	48	88	17	20	7
Absent on pass	93	57	62	77	126	194
Numbers Returned	187	119	153	101	179	185

Source: NWPO Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Aug. 1880, Aug. 1881, Aug. 1882, Jan. 1884, Sept. 1884, and July 1885.

After 1883, however, local officers in an attempt to curb the abscondings, liberalised the issue of passes, enforced the roll-call and began to flog those who were captured outside their registered zones. However, this seems to have been an exercise in tidying up the returns, for although the number of abscondings fell sharply, the liberal issue of passes meant that almost any Aheria or Harburah could now 'abscond' on pass.¹¹⁰

In the ensuing decade, plans for the resettlement of the Sanorias, the Aherias and the Harburahs did not materialise, and though various attempts were aimed at tightening the procedures of surveillance, abscondings continued.

The abscondings disappointed W. Kaye, the Commissioner of the Agra division, who considered the Act to be a 'dead letter' in Etah, and recommended that the district be withdrawn from its operation.¹¹¹ Of the 969 Aherias, originally registered in the district, 209 had absconded to Aligarh by 1885. The difficulty in exercising surveillance over the Aherias was two-fold: first the Act was not in operation in Aligarh, and second, the majority of the Aherias in both Aligarh and Etah were ordinary cultivators, and although they maintained relations with those registered, the extension of the Act in Etah or its application in Aligarh could not be considered.

Even so the disciplinary system was not in vain. Etah district officials interpreted the effect of the Act on the proclaimed Aherias differently from Kaye. For M.L. Ferrar, the Magistrate of Etah, surveillance had not been a failure despite the abscondings: the 'harassing attention of the police' had had its effect on the Aherias, so much so that he had to personally intervene on several occasions to remove 49 'respectable if poor' Aheria peasants from the operation of the Act.¹¹² It is likely that a large proportion of the abscondings were a reaction to police harassment. But the measures adopted by the police had another effect: the involvement of the Aherias in dacoities and robberies in Etah declined, and the Magistrate was satisfied that most of the registered Aherias and Harburas were taking to agriculture. Although warrants had been issued for the arrest of those who had absconded to

¹¹⁰ No. 149, 30 April 1883, NWPO, Jud. (Cr.) Progs., Jan. 1884.

¹¹¹ No. 3977/XV-40, NWPO, Police Progs., July 1888.

¹¹² No. 91, 20 Feb. 1868, NWPO, Police Progs., July 1866.

Aligarh, no arrests were made as the Aligarh police considered the mere threat of arrest sufficient to keep the runaway Aherias under control. Their confidence was well-founded and the emigrants settled down in Aligarh as peasant cultivators and labourers. Thus when the Magistrate of Etah recommended that the district be removed from the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act, his reasons were different from those of the Divisional Commissioner. For him the Act had run its course, 'and those [Aherias] who [were] inclined to break the law [were] ordinary thieves to be disposed of by ordinary police'.¹¹³

Thus the abscondings lent themselves to two opposing interpretations of the working of the Criminal Tribes Act. The district authorities did not attach any unfavourable significance to the figures as there was other evidence to suggest that the surveillance had been effective. But to the Commissioner of the Agra division and the Inspector General of Police of the North Western Provinces, the abscondings appeared to be a measure of the failure of the Act and an indication of the inability of the district authorities to exercise surveillance successfully.¹¹⁴ William Crooke who succeeded M.L. Ferrar in Etah, corroborated his predecessor's conclusions. The system of passes and the roll-call had had a positive influence in repressing crime and 'there is no evidence', Crooke confirmed, that the 'members of the tribes [Aherias and Harburahs] here have shown any special criminality ... during the past three years'.¹¹⁵ He, however, disagreed with Ferrar on the question of withdrawing the district from the operation of the Act. Surveillance had forced the errant Aherias to seek occupations in agriculture and 'if the Act was withdrawn they would undoubtedly revert to a life of crime'.¹¹⁶ Instead, Crooke felt that the Act should be extended to the neighbouring districts. On the whole he expressed satisfaction that most Aherias had some 'ostensible means of honest living' even though these means were 'very precarious and uncertain'.¹¹⁷ Patently, the acceptance by the Aherias of honest poverty was a clear measure of the success of the disciplinary system.

The threat of arrest and the pressure of constant police harassment made the Aherias accept cultivation with all its uncertainties as a desirable option. There is some evidence to suggest that the registered Aherias usually held some land or worked as agricultural labourers in Etah, supplementing their meagre incomes from land by burglaries, robberies and petty dacoities. Once the system of roll-call and passes was rigorously imposed the Aherias of Etah eschewed serious crimes and returned to agriculture, and were no

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ No. 233/VIII-325, 21 June 1886, NWPO, Police Progs., July 1888.

¹¹⁵ No. 409, File 325, 26 Aug. 1887, NWPO, Police Progs., July 1888.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

longer regarded as 'the turbulent criminal class they were supposed to be'.¹¹⁸ Settlement in agriculture therefore functioned as an equivocation between reformation and repression. Such a calculus was integral to the disciplinary mechanism, and was clearly recognised as such by police officers.¹¹⁹

These considerations motivated the vigorous enforcement of the disciplinary rules on the Sanorias of Lalitpur with telling effect: 'the bulk of the people [Sanorias], it was reported in 1888, under surveillance are settling down to a life of industry'.¹²⁰

Although serious crimes among the Aherias and Sanorias declined as the measures of surveillance were strictly enforced, plans to resettle them, particularly the Sanorias, remained ineffectual. During 1890 and 1891, no special measures were taken to assist the Aherias of Etah either. Assistance was considered unnecessary and wasteful especially since they were taking to agriculture on their own. So successful was the surveillance that the Magistrate of Etah cancelled the registration of 56 Aherias during 1889-90.¹²¹

The scenario at Lalitpur was different. While a number of names—37 in all—were removed from the registered list in consideration of good conduct, yet many Sanorias absconded mainly because of bad harvests and the high prices that prevailed in Lalitpur during 1890 and 1891.¹²² An inquiry into the conditions of the Sanorias in the two settlements of Bir and Sanwaho in Lalitpur revealed that the Sanorias had good reason to abscond. G.L. Lang, the Commissioner of Jhansi, personally visited the settlements in February 1891. He found the Sanorias entirely dependent on rain water for cultivation. As a consequence they could cultivate only one crop in the *kharif* season; their fields went uncultivated during the *rabi*. Besides, they had no working capital and no moneylender to advance credit. They raised money for the *kharif* seed by selling wood and grass 'but none had the means or the energy to raise a winter crop'.¹²³ These difficulties together with the fact that plots were scattered over large distances made *rabi* cropping impossible. The commissioner regarded the land held by the Sanorias to be 'practically valueless', and recommended an immediate investment of Rs. 400 in wells to rescue the colony from imminent collapse and abandonment.¹²⁴

However, the desertions from Bir and Sanwaho did not disturb the equanimity of the police. For one, the Tehri *darbar* had agreed to help keep the activities of the Sanorias in check, and those Sanorias that did

¹¹⁸ No. 3046A, 3 Nov. 1888, NWPO, Police Progs., Jan. 1889.

¹¹⁹ No. 1471A, 12 June 1886, NWPO, Police Progs., July 1886.

¹²⁰ No. 3046A, loc. cit.

¹²¹ No. 1929A, 29 July 1889, NWPO, Police Progs., Sept. 1889.

¹²² No. 1190A, NWPO, Police Progs., Aug. 1890.

¹²³ 2011/IV-A-11, 21 Feb. 1891, NWPO, Police Progs., May 1891.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

abscond had neither the means nor the support of former patrons to take to their erstwhile expeditions. Therefore the Inspector General of Police advised against any further investment in the two Sanoria settlements. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces agreed, and instructed the abandonment of the experiment. The government was not interested in the fate of the Sanorias after their crimes had ceased to be a threat to law and order.¹²⁵ This abandonment was restricted to the withholding of all future investments, but police surveillance was to continue as before. In 1892 the government of the North Western Provinces emphasised that the surveillance of the Sanorias was not to be relaxed; rather it suggested 'increased surveillance'.¹²⁶

By 1892 the Aherias were no longer considered a law and order problem either, as a majority of those registered had settled down in agriculture. The following year Etah was withdrawn from the operation of the Act, though a special police force was retained.¹²⁷ In Lalitpur, in the absence of any further grants, the population of Bir and Sanwaho dwindled away. Those who remained, cultivated one harvest and subsisted as agricultural labourers during the *rabi* season on plots and sites that had artificial water resources. In 1895 the *Report on the Working of the Criminal Tribes Act* commented with regard to the Sanorias:

The working of the Act cannot be said to exhibit any advance; at the same time ... [as far as the] proclaimed population [of Sanorias] is concerned the tribe cannot be charged with having done much harm within these Provinces, and the number who evidently visited other parts of India on predatory expeditions appears to be very small.¹²⁸

The application of the Criminal Tribes Act to the Bawarias, the Sanorias, the Aherias and Harburahs between 1871 and 1895 shows that resettlement of the criminal tribes was envisaged as an apprenticeship not in successful agriculture but in the virtues of moral livelihood itself. Thus the procedures of surveillance, the 'failure' of the Bawaria experiment at Bidauli, and the abandoning of resettlement schemes in Etah, Bir and Sanwaho reveals a disciplinary system, which was initially linked to a didactic plan of resettlement, as a part of a different strategy. The criminal tribes were not only forced to take up the honest livelihood of peasant cultivators but were made to accept the social and economic insecurities associated with it. In this, the Criminal Tribes Act attempted to divide the space within which

¹²⁵ Police Department Resolution No. 550/VIII-819-4 of 1891, dated 26 May 1891, NWPO, Police Progs., May 1891.

¹²⁶ No. 1516/VII-528A-12 of 1892, NWPO, Police Progs., Nov. 1892.

¹²⁷ No. 4648A, 2 Oct. 1893, NWPO, Police Progs., Jan. 1894.

¹²⁸ NWPO, Police Progs., Dec. 1895, No. 1.

poverty and crime existed. In its stead it sought to produce two segregated domains: one of the moral poor and the other of the criminal tribes.

Before we conclude, it will be useful to recapitulate the main arguments. The category of criminal tribes was stereotypical in the sense that its defining characteristics though seen to be rooted in Indian society and its past were brought together in an ahistorical and decontextualised form. The criminal tribes were at once a metaphor for Indian society and a set of 'abnormal' native people who had to be disciplined and controlled by the colonial state. Thus the language that had been developed to explain the criminality of the criminal tribes also spelt out the terms of their reclamation. Disciplinary power was exercised to control and convert them into settled peasants—the moral subjects of the Raj. Hence agricultural resettlement along with surveillance was regarded as the appropriate path to the 'normalisation' of the criminal types. However, the strategy of agricultural reclamation presented a contradiction, and in the long run surveillance and punishment took precedence over resettlement. This was because the inability of the criminal tribes to take to agricultural cultivation was rarely seen in the light of landlord power, usurious dealings or crop failures. Rather this was mostly regarded as an indication of their unwillingness to accept the hard life of a peasant, an attitude that tended to reinforce the stereotype of innate criminality.

International business, the state and industrialisation in India: Early growth in the Indian cigarette industry, 1900–19

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Introduction

In the history of British colonial policy in India the First World War has generally been characterised as a watershed.¹ It is during this period that the imperial hegemony of Britain over Indian economic policy matters is seen to have given way to a set of policies which, at least nominally, provided for greater autonomy in political and economic affairs. Political reform was embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, popularly known as the Montagu–Chelmsford (or Montford) reforms, which promised self-government to India along the same lines as the Dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, while an acceleration in the pace of industrial development was provided for by the Report of the Indian Industrial Commission that was published in 1918. In an important essay,² however, Dewey has illustrated that many of the economic initiatives contained in the Industrial Commission's Report had actually begun to be implemented by the Government of India from the beginning of the century, and that the report itself

¹ See, for instance, P. Spear, *A History of India*, Vol. II, London, 1984, Chap. 15.

² C.J. Dewey, 'The Government of India's "New Industrial Policy", 1900–1925: Formation and Failure' in K.N. Chaudhuri and C.J. Dewey, eds., *Economy and Society. Essays in Indian Economic and Social History*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 215–57.

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represents nothing more than the definitive statement of the mature policy; a policy which in fact ran aground during the 1920s as many areas of decision-making were transferred away from the centre towards the provinces following the implementation of the Montford reforms.

The initiatives that made up this new economic policy, which Dewey characterises as the Government of India's New Industrial Policy, emerged at first in a piecemeal fashion from the provincial level. Gradually, however, they were adopted by many officials in positions of authority within the administration in Calcutta and coordinated into a series of measures designed to promote the process of industrial development in British India. Principal among these was the provision of information of a kind which potential industrialists were liable to find helpful in developing modern industrial concerns in India. A focus for this was provided by the foundation of the Commercial Intelligence Department. This organisation began to publish the *Indian Trade Journal* in April 1906 as a medium for disseminating useful information, and also employed a range of experts to answer queries and provide initial research and development facilities for firms too small to employ their own research staff. Ultimately, a range of policy initiatives were put in hand by the Government of India including the promotion of technical education and training, a degree of capital provision through state-supervised industrial banks, increased patronage of local producers for government procurements, and various agricultural development schemes.³ However, with the exception of the tobacco industry, which is considered in the present essay, it was not until after the granting of fiscal autonomy as part of the Montford reforms that these measures could be supplemented by significant tariff protection.

Before the First World War imperial interests, both strategic and economic, held ultimate sway over matters of domestic significance to India. Economically, this implied two broad constraints on policy which were of utmost importance; the avoidance of a budget deficit on behalf of the Government of India and the maintenance of a balance of trade surplus for Britain. The need to avoid a budget deficit severely constrained the extent to which the Government of India could finance measures to encourage local industrial growth on the strength of an essentially static tax revenue base. Expanding tax revenues could most easily be achieved by levying higher customs duties, but such a policy cut across the free trade principle which Britain imposed upon India and which played a key role in balancing her trade with the rest of the world. The triangular system of world trade by which Britain's deficit with Europe and America was offset by her surplus with India, who in turn ran a surplus with the rest of the world, has been widely acknowledged as a key feature stabilising the international trading system in the thirty to forty

³ Ibid., pp. 216-17.

years before the First World War.⁴ Its maintenance required the minimum obstacles to trade, at least as long as British goods held pre-eminence among India's imports.

As a consequence of these imperial pressures, India entered the twentieth century with a general tariff set at 5 per cent *ad valorem* for the majority of imports; a rate which was designed merely to raise revenue.⁵ Higher tariffs were seen in London as a tax on British exports which served to undermine British trade to the benefit of the indigenous, or Swadeshi, producers of India. As a policy, it failed to recognise that a number of the British firms whose export trade would be damaged by higher tariffs could adopt the alternative approach of investing directly in the Indian economy and earn an income for Britain via the repatriation of profits and dividends rather than through receipts for exported goods. In this way, it would have been possible to promote industrial development in India via tariffs without necessarily sacrificing all the foreign earnings which these firms' activities generated.

In fact, it was during this period that firms in Britain and America, encouraged by the increased productivity provided by mechanisation and by the developments in transport and communications, first began to explore the potential advantages of direct investment in overseas plants. While many of these firms were drawn abroad to exploit primary resources, some were attracted principally by the potential market for their goods. One product falling into the latter category, which was well-suited to direct production overseas, was manufactured tobacco goods. Tobacco was a traditional industry that had been revolutionised in Europe and America during the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the development of a new type of product, the cigarette, which by 1899 could be manufactured by machines producing up to 500 units per minute.⁶

Backed by new forms of sophisticated marketing, the cigarette industry emerged during the 1890s as one of the first preserves of big business both in Britain, where it was led by W.D. & H.O. Wills, and in America, where a tobacco trust had been created by James Duke and his associates under the title of the American Tobacco Company. Given the cheapness of the new product resulting from mechanisation, the potential for continued expansion into foreign markets was enormous and by the mid-1890s both Wills and American Tobacco were marketing their goods in India. The subsequent

⁴ Examples are S.B. Saul, *Studies in British Overseas Trade 1870-1914*, Liverpool, 1960; M. De Cecco, *Money and Empire: The International Gold Standard, 1870-1914*, Oxford, 1974; A.J.H. Latham, *The International Economy and the Underdeveloped World, 1865-1914*, London, 1978.

⁵ B.R. Tomlinson, 'India and the British Empire, 1880-1935', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 12(4), 1975, p. 344.

⁶ UNCTAD *Marketing and Distribution of Tobacco* TD/B/C.1/205, Geneva, 1978, p. 18.

development of a vertically integrated cigarette manufacturing operation in India during the early twentieth century by the British-American Tobacco Company (BAT), the overseas operating arm of the leading American and British cigarette manufacturers, represents one of the first meetings between the colonial government of India and a modern, market-driven multinational corporation.⁷

In reviewing this episode, the analysis which follows highlights a number of issues of central importance to the question of India's early industrialisation. Firstly, it demonstrates the degree of success which a well-targeted tariff could achieve when coupled with a strategic development objective and illustrates one of the most successful initiatives of the Indian government's New Industrial Policy. Second, it exposes the intense disagreement which was manifest between London and Calcutta on the question of tariff protection in the decade before the outbreak of World War I and the extent to which certain officials in Whitehall sought to obstruct the process of industrial development in India at this time. Third, it serves to illustrate the way in which the growth of Swadeshi industries, even when afforded a significant degree of tariff protection, could be undermined by foreign capital. As such, it reveals the ambiguous nature of a policy of import-substituting industrialisation under a colonial government, even a benign one, given the existence of multinational firms such as dominated the international tobacco industry.

Developing the Market for Imported Cigarettes in India

Before 1900 only a small proportion of the tobacco imported into India was accounted for by cigarettes. The earliest instance of cigarette imports is to be found in the 1891 edition of *Thaker's Indian Directory* in which the firm of Theodoro Vafiadis & Co. is listed as 'manufacturers and importers of Egyptian cigarettes'.⁸ The following year's edition provides the first evidence of machine-made imports from America and Britain. As would be typical of many British and American firms at this time who wished to explore the

⁷ As Jones had demonstrated, the Government of India had come under pressure from international business in the oil industry regarding the exploitation of reserves in Burma. It had refused Shell Transport and Trading's request to place a countervailing excise on Burmese kerosene oil entering the Indian market and in 1902 it turned down Standard Oil's application for a prospecting licence. In both cases, Jones argues, the decision reflected the Indian government's desire to advance the development of Burma's oil industry. G.G. Jones, 'The State and Economic Development in India 1890-1947: The Case of Oil', *Modern Asian Studies*, 13(3), 1979, pp. 353-75.

⁸ Goswami mentions that Vafiadis' hand-rolled Egyptian cigarettes were popular as a status symbol among the expatriate businessmen — the *burra sahibs* — in Calcutta around this time. See O. Goswami, 'Then Came the Marwaris', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 22(3), 1985, p. 225.

potential market for their goods in India, the large cigarette manufacturers engaged an Indian-based managing agency to organise the marketing of their goods. Rather than setting up an overseas branch directly, these agents would be appointed—usually for a fixed period of five or ten years—to represent the firm locally and to arrange for the distribution of their goods in exchange for a commission. The agencies themselves invariably acted on behalf of a number of firms; often, as in the present case, for companies whose products were in direct competition with each other.

The managing agency which served a number of tobacco interests in India was George Atherton & Co., originating from Liverpool and operating a branch in Calcutta. The 1892 edition of *Thaker's Directory* reveals that this company acted on behalf of a number of foreign firms, in various trades, including two branches of the American Tobacco Company, namely Allen & Ginter and W.S. Kimball, in addition to a British cigarette export company, Thomas Bear & Sons.⁹ Two years later the name of W.D. & H.O. Wills first appears as a client of Atherton's along with the American Tobacco Company, now substituted for Allen & Ginter and W.S. Kimball. Atherton's local representative in Calcutta was Nicholas Chaytor Jellico whose task it was to organise the distribution of the cigarettes and tobacco shipped to India by the firm's clients in Britain and America. By 1896 it is clear that Jellico had enlisted the services of a relatively well-established Indian tobacco company, Bukhsh Ellahie & Co., to provide the main sales and distribution network for these new goods. Early advertising by Bukhsh Ellahie in *Thaker's Indian Directory* suggests that the target market at this time was the regimental messes and clubs of the expatriate population of India.¹⁰

The international rivalry between the American Tobacco Company and the British tobacco firms, most notably W.D. & H.O. Wills, which had been steadily growing during the 1890s came to a head during the opening two years of the twentieth century. In 1901 the American Tobacco Company bought control of the Liverpool-based firm of Ogden and initiated a competitive struggle in Britain which became known as the 'tobacco war'. Led by Wills, a group of the main British producers responded to the invasion by amalgamating their interests to form the Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Ltd.¹¹ and fought a commercial battle with

⁹ BAT and Thomas Bear amalgamated their operations in India during the early 1920s and the two companies both had interests in the Imperial Tobacco Company of India which was created as an umbrella for BAT's sales, manufacturing and leaf businesses in India in 1919. See C. Basu, *Challenge and Change. The ITC Story: 1910-1985*, Calcutta, 1988, pp. 66-80.

¹⁰ An article in the trade journal, *Tobacco*, supports this assumption that early imports of machine-made cigarettes were 'principally for the troops 'who are accustomed to smoke English cigarettes, because they have used them at home'. *Tobacco*, 352, April 1910, p. 47.

¹¹ With a capital value of £17,545,000 in 1905 the Imperial Tobacco Company was by far the largest company in Britain at this time. The American Tobacco Company, with a capitalisation of \$502 m. (approx. £103,505,000), was at this time the second largest corporation in America. UNCTAD, op. cit., Table 2, p. 5.

American Tobacco which influenced tobacco markets as far afield as India, Japan, China and Australia. In September 1902 the two giant enterprises reached an agreement which ended the war and which profoundly influenced the subsequent development of the international tobacco industry. Agreeing to restrict their own activities to their respective national markets, American Tobacco and Imperial jointly set up the British-American Tobacco Company (BAT) to carry on the emergent trade with countries outside Britain and America. Factories in both Britain and America were placed under the control of BAT along with all the overseas assets of the two groups. Ownership in the new company was distributed two-thirds to American Tobacco and one-third to Imperial and James Duke, President of American Tobacco, became BAT's first Chairman.¹²

Table 1
Tobacco Imports into British India (lbs.), 1900-1915

<i>Year Ending March</i>	<i>Manufactured Cigarettes</i>	<i>Tobacco Other</i>	<i>Unmanufactured Tobacco</i>	<i>Total</i>
1900	195,217*	2,361,689	832,672	3,389,578
1901	1,165,399	2,068,771	513,839	3,748,009
1902	1,510,287	1,979,390	927,011	4,416,688
1903	1,724,050	1,970,469	505,191	4,199,710
1904	2,240,179	1,896,927	558,026	4,695,132
1905	2,518,659	1,762,587	801,943	5,083,189
1906	3,119,071	1,712,861	679,273	5,511,205
1907	2,912,841	1,672,558	1,350,390	5,935,789
1908	3,634,192	1,446,640	1,224,818	6,305,650
1909	2,995,692	1,349,031	1,212,640	5,557,363
1910	3,083,746	1,541,656	2,703,254	7,328,656
1911	1,113,005	438,693	251,372	1,803,070
1912	1,414,830	632,774	157,259	2,204,863
1913	1,450,773	614,544	286,801	2,352,118
1914	1,591,138	584,919	281,633	2,457,690
1915	1,439,800	614,931	164,784	2,219,515

* Note: Cigarette imports were only enumerated separately from January 1900, i.e., the figure for 1900 covers only the final quarter.

Source: 'Annual Statement of the Sea-Borne Trade and Navigation of British India', 1904, 1909, 1913 and 1915.

The tobacco war in England helped to spark off a sharp rise in Indian cigarette imports in the opening years of the twentieth century (see Table 1). During the early days of the conflict, American Tobacco's representative in Japan, E.J. Parrish, had noted in a letter to New York that the company's

¹² For an account of the early development of BAT generally, see H. Cox, 'Growth and Ownership in the International Tobacco Industry: BAT 1902-27', *Business History*, 31(1), 1989, pp. 44-67.

agent in Calcutta was 'being bothered by cheap cigarettes [made] by Wills and others'.¹³ In fact, by the 1900 edition of *Thaker's Directory*, Atherton & Co. no longer lists the American Tobacco Company as a client while, almost immediately, Bukhsh Ellahie are found to be promoting Wills' cigarettes with increased vigour.

As Wills, now part of the Imperial Tobacco Company, attempted to expand their existing operation, James Duke's American Tobacco Company set out along another tack. There is no easily available evidence to show whether American withdrew its agency from Atherton & Co., or whether it simply expired, or indeed whether Atherton themselves, perhaps under pressure from Wills, elected to deal in the goods of its fellow British company to the exclusion of its American rival. What is certain is that by 1902 American Tobacco had set up its own operation in Calcutta and had dispensed with all contractual arrangements with third parties in favour of a direct, hierarchical form of operation based on an overseas branch. Such a step had already been taken by Duke's company in Japan and China by this time while, generally speaking, it had been resisted by Wills and most other foreign companies operating in India. American Tobacco's first step in the process was to set up a depot in Calcutta staffed by four Americans and allow dealers to purchase goods directly from there. The next step was to set up a Head Office in India at 95 Clive Street, Calcutta, and to register this, not simply as the headquarters of the American Tobacco Company but also as the address of their Japanese subsidiary company, the Murai Brothers Co. Ltd. of Tokyo. Thus, Duke's company was able to obtain maximum advantage from its multinational status by utilising overseas production facilities to reduce the transport costs of servicing the Indian market.

The conflict between American and British interests in India was ultimately settled in England by the Agreement of September 1902 between American Tobacco and Imperial which created the British-American Tobacco Company. The new company took over the operations of both Wills and American Tobacco in India and, to begin with, Duke's close ally, James Thomas, was transferred from Hong Kong to Calcutta to take charge of operations.¹⁴ The Head office remained at 95 Clive Street and the company ended its association with Bukhsh Ellahie which, nevertheless, continued to trade in tobacco goods. The direct association with Atherton & Co. was also drawn to a close, but it seems that the expert knowledge which that firm had gained of marketing goods in India was retained in the shape of N.C. Jellico.

The Expansion of BAT in India

By 1900 the market for machine-made cigarettes in India was still in its infancy. The early imports of these goods were principally for the European

¹³ R.F. Durdan, *The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929*, Durham, 1975, p. 97.

¹⁴ *BAT Bulletin*, 11(9), January 1921, p. 185.

population, and in particular the military, who had developed a taste for the product already. However, the emergence of a strata of middle class Indians in the rapidly expanding urban areas of the country provided BAT with the beginnings of a potential market among the native population which the company sought to develop during the opening years of the twentieth century. Thus, between 1902 and 1908 BAT rapidly constructed a distribution framework designed to serve the entire Indian Empire and by the end of this period the company had set up its own branches in Bombay, Rangoon, Madras, Karachi and Delhi to operate alongside the original base in Calcutta. Each of these branches was managed by a salaried employee of BAT with the exception of Rangoon where Messrs Binning & Co. were appointed as depot managers. In addition the company had created a further subsidiary, BAT (Ceylon) Ltd., registered in London in 1905 to oversee operations there.

The creation of a distribution network ultimately geared to supplying every corner of the Indian subcontinent was a significant development in the business structure of British India. Bukhsh Ellahie's own branches had only embraced Calcutta, Delhi and Karachi, with Bombay, Madras and Rangoon served by agencies. But as in China, where the company was well-entrenched, BAT was determined to take on the Indian market as a whole. Once this distribution framework was in place, the company began to initiate the development of locally-based production facilities. This exercise in vertical integration followed along the same lines that which had been initiated by American Tobacco in China and carries the distinctive imprint of the corporate thinking characteristic of its head office at New York.¹⁵

BAT's first attempt at domestic manufacturing was undertaken as early as 1906, when the company set up a small plant in Karachi using ten Bonsack cigarette-making machines.¹⁶ This initiative was soon abandoned because the climate in that area proved unsuitable for storing tobacco but the following year work began on building a new factory for cigarette manufacturing and this plant, opened in May 1908, was located some 200 miles northwest of Calcutta at Monghyr (now Munger) close to the tobacco growing area of Rangpur. This enterprise was set up as BAT's manufacturing arm in India under a new subsidiary company called the Peninsular Tobacco Company which was registered in London with an authorised capital of £75,000. To begin with the factory was capable of producing a daily output of one million cigarettes, although this capacity was quickly expanded using second-hand machinery transferred from China as this was, in turn, replaced by new,

¹⁵ For a detailed account of BAT's early development in China, see S. Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1939*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980. See also, J. Osterhammel, 'British Business in China' in R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and G.G. Jones, eds., *British Business in Asia since 1860*, Cambridge, 1989.

¹⁶ R.G. Baker, unpublished mimeo, n.d. (c. 1967).

faster machines.¹⁷ By 1910, the factory was being run by a management staff of around 30 British and American employees and serviced by some 660 local operatives.

The timing of BAT's decision to set up a local manufacturing plant in India was almost certainly influenced by the Swadeshi boycott of foreign goods in Bengal which had been provoked by Curzon's decision to partition the province in 1905. A detailed study of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal has shown that cigarettes were one of the products which were badly hit by the boycott and, as the protest gathered strength during 1906, imports slowed considerably.¹⁸ The ability of the boycott to affect sales of cigarettes in Bengal serves to illustrate that the market for these products had begun to expand beyond those consumers from within the British expatriate community and military personnel and had now started to make substantial inroads among the educated, middle-class Indians who were based in the urban areas of the country.

The Swadeshi movement, as well as reducing the sales of imported cigarettes, also provided the opportunity for local firms to engage in import-substituting activities. Hence by the time the Peninsular Tobacco Company opened their factory in Monghyr a number of indigenous cigarette manufacturing concerns had sprung up in Calcutta and East Bengal.¹⁹ Of these, the most serious rival to BAT appears to have been the East India Tobacco Company which had been launched in 1907 with a capital value of Rs. 5 lakhs and an estimated output of about 20 million cigarettes a month.²⁰ Some of these newly formed enterprises may have benefited from the operation of the New Industrial Policy which had recently been adopted in Calcutta. In terms of information regarding the operation and availability of capital equipment, the recently-launched *Indian Trade Journal* offered its readers the opportunity to inspect 'photographs, catalogues and price list of a British-made, high-power cigarette machine' during 1907.²¹

Clearly, the emergence of locally-based rival firms provided an important spur to BAT in their decision to locate a factory in India. However, other considerations were also important. One factor, related to the Swadeshi movement, was that a locally-based firm would command greater consumer support from the nationalists and could more easily produce cigarettes with

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ S. Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908*, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 144-45.

¹⁹ Sarkar's study mentions three Swadeshi units which had been set up in Calcutta by 1907 to produce cheap cigarettes (the Globe Cigarette Company, the East India Cigarette Company and the Bengal Cigarette Manufacturing Company) and another in East Bengal (the Rangpur Tobacco Company). S. Sarkar, op. cit., p. 129.

²⁰ Confidential dispatch from the Finance Department of the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, No. 44 of 1911. L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 501/11., I.O.R., London.

²¹ *Indian Trade Journal*, 7(80), 10 October 1907, p. 64.

brand-names like Madari, Annapurna and Cow that appealed to those holding such sentiments. Another benefit lay in the potential for reduced production costs through the use of local labour and indigenous tobacco. The use of local leaf as a means of holding down the price of cigarettes was emphasised in a survey, conducted during 1910, on the state of the tobacco industry in Bengal by the local government of the province. Concerning the Peninsular Tobacco Company's activities, the survey stated:

The object of the business seems to be to establish a market (i) for cheaper cigarettes made of Virginian tobacco mixed with the country article, and (ii) for the country article with a flavour of Virginian tobacco, the latter ingredient being added in no larger quantity than will result in a palatable cigarette. It is the cheap cigarette, made almost entirely from country tobacco, from which the Company hopes to derive its profits. At present the taste for the local tobacco, unmixed with Virginian, has still to be developed on a commercial scale... It is stated that about 30 varieties of cigarette are made, and the price of Rs. 2 per 1,000 to the bazar dealer indicates the class of cheap trade which it is hoped to push.²²

The main thrust of BAT's marketing strategy, therefore, was to extend the sales of cigarettes to encompass the most humble income earners within India. Additionally, an instrumental method for keeping down production costs was to substantially increase the proportion of locally grown tobacco used in manufacturing. The first step in this process was the setting up of a separate leaf department as part of the Peninsular Tobacco Company around 1908. Initially under the guidance of P. Arrington, the former manager of American Tobacco's leaf purchasing department, responsibility for this operation was soon passed over to another ex-American Tobacco man, Robert Campbell Harrison.²³ The substitution of local leaf for American tobacco required a good deal of preparatory work for BAT's local management since the existing leaf was unsuitable for use in cigarettes. However, it is clear from the figures presented in Table 1 that the process of substitution had made little impression on the import of unmanufactured tobacco before the decision was made by the Government of India in 1910 to substantially increase the level of customs duty on foreign tobacco.

The Government of India's Interest in the Tobacco Industry

The Government of India was convinced that the principal obstacle to the development of a major cigarette manufacturing industry in India was

²² Reported in the confidential dispatch from the Finance Department of the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 9 February 1911, op. cit., note 23.

²³ *BAT Bulletin*, 14(37), May 1923, p. 872. The strain of leaf which was eventually developed for use in India was named after Harrison.

not a shortage of capital but the inadequacies of the tobacco leaf which Indian cultivators produced. The problem was twofold. First, the types of plants grown were of low quality and were unsuitable for use either in cigarettes or as wrapper for cigars. Second, the curing process used in India was extremely crude and produced a form of tobacco which, while adequate for the native bidi, could not readily be assimilated into the manufacture of cigarettes. The first problem was tackled head-on with experiments in the cultivation of different strains of tobacco being undertaken by the Agricultural Department of the I.C.S. at their Research stations in Rangpur and Pusa. In October 1909, the *Indian Trade Journal* carried an editorial which argued that India was importing unnecessary quantities of tobacco and cigarettes from abroad. It pointed out that one factory had already been set up to mass produce cigarettes in Bengal²⁴ but that it had been forced to grow its own tobacco.²⁵ What was needed, the editorial continued, were a number of curing plants in different districts where raw tobacco could be brought by cultivators for the difficult process of curing. These pleas for the development of an indigenous tobacco leaf processing industry to support cigarette manufacturing were given a fiscal boost early in 1910 as the Indian government sought a new source of income.

One of the major problems confronting the Government of India at this time was the structure of its revenue base. During the opening years of the twentieth century the majority of income continued to be derived from the land, but the scope for expansion from this source was strictly limited. Another traditionally important source of income was the revenue generated from the sale of opium. However, these sales were being gradually phased out and an estimate by the Revenue Department of the India Office around this time suggested that the total loss in revenue from the diminishing sales of Bengal opium between 1908 and 1917 would amount to between £4 to £5 million.²⁶ The most convenient alternative source of revenue was customs duties, but any increase in these was fiercely resisted by London before the World War I on free trade grounds.

The constraints imposed by the existing revenue base continually threatened the ability of the Government of India to generate a budget surplus

²⁴ This would have been BAT's Peninsular Tobacco Company factory at Monghyr. The report refers to the concern as being 'European' although, at this point in time, BAT was an American majority-owned company. The Journal's error may well have been genuine since the Peninsular Tobacco Company was registered in London and most, although not all, of the management would have been English. *Indian Trade Journal*, 15(187), 28 October 1909, pp. 82-83.

²⁵ Although a number of contemporary reports in the *Indian Trade Journal* make the point that BAT grew its own tobacco for the Monghyr factory, as a general principle BAT's policy was always to buy raw tobacco on the open market. The company did, however, own land in India on which it cultivated seedlings for distribution and sale to local farmers and carried out experiments on different strains of tobacco.

²⁶ L/E/7/668; R & S File No. 2604/10, I.O.R.

around this time, and these inherent difficulties were compounded during 1907 and 1908 by monsoon failures which cut the level of agricultural output. In 1908/09 the Government of India generated a budget deficit of almost £4,000,000 leading the authorities in Calcutta to propose an increase in the general revenue tariff from 5 to 7.5 per cent.²⁷ Although this proposal was rejected by the India Office as a tax on British exports, the financial situation continued to demand new fiscal measures. On the 6 January 1910, the Indian government forwarded a financial statement to the Secretary of State in London, Lord Morley, with figures which projected a small deficit of nominal surplus for 1909/10 and a major deficit for the year 1910/11 in the absence of fresh taxation.²⁸ The prospect of three consecutive budget deficits provoked deep anxiety at the India Office in London.

Finding their proposals for a general increase in the tariff rate rebuffed, the Government of India proposed a new solution to the revenue shortages which was to substantially increase the customs duties on imported tobacco. At 5 per cent *ad valorem*, the existing general tariff rate was extremely low, amounting to less than 1d per lb on unmanufactured tobacco imports and between 1d and 2d per lb on cigarettes. The India Office was certainly willing to consider some advance on these rates (the new Liberal government in Britain had raised import duties on tobacco sharply during its own crisis budget of 1909) but balked at the rates requested by Calcutta. These measures proposed flat rate duties of Rs. 2-0-0 (2s 8d) per lb on unmanufactured tobacco and Rs. 2-8-0 (3s 4d) per lb on cigarettes. It was argued however that, compared with the duties in force in Britain at this time (see Table 2), these proposed rates were perfectly reasonable.

Table 2

Tobacco Duties in India and the U.K., 1910
(per lb. in s.d.)

	Duty in U.K.	Duty in India	
		Proposed	Adopted
Unmanufactured tobacco	3 10 (a)	2 8	2 0
Cigars	7 0	4 0	3 4
Cigarettes	5 8	3 4	2 8 (b)
Other Manufactured tobacco	5 4	3 0	2 2

Notes: (a) Average, (b) Subject to a minimum of 6s.8d. per 1,000.

Source: Finance Dept., India Office. File: L/E/7/687

The strongest opposition to the implementation of such dramatic rises in the import duties on tobacco came from the Financial Secretary at the

²⁷ B.R. Tomlinson, 'India and the British Empire, 1880-1935', op. cit., p. 345.

²⁸ Confidential dispatch from the Government of India Finance Dept. to Secretary of State for India, No. 15 of 1911, L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

India Office, L. Abrahams. In January 1910, Abrahams had noted to the Secretary of State that the size of the increase in duties would be such as to raise the price of cheap cigarettes by as much 250 per cent which 'would probably give rise to violent criticism, and might almost destroy the import trade in cigarettes (and in other kinds of tobacco), and defeat the hope of deriving a large revenue from them'. In addition, Abrahams argued that the proposed duties were open to objection 'as being likely to protect the Indian tobacco growing and tobacco manufacturing industries'. Whilst he accepted that, for the present time, India possessed neither tobacco of sufficiently high quality, nor the necessary manufacturing facilities to take advantage of the potential protection afforded by the duties, he urged caution: '...it is necessary to have regard to the possibility that the growth and manufacture of tobacco in India might be developed on new lines if very high duties, such as the Government of India recommend, are suddenly imposed'.²⁹

Secretary of State Morley, a disciple of *laissez-faire*,³⁰ was undoubtedly influenced by Abrahams' arguments and sought a reduction in the level of duty. Eventually, a compromise was reached and, as Table 2 shows, the duties which were finally adopted were a little below those originally proposed. In addition, the Government of India was requested to explore methods by which revenue could be raised from the tobacco produced in India itself, as a way of providing a countervailing excise to the protectionist effect of the duties. Ultimately, however, Morley had been forced to accept the steep rise in the import duty on tobacco in order to obviate the possibility of a budget deficit, and the increased duties were levied from March 1910.

The new duties quickly hit problems. Immediately following their implementation, Morley had discovered that the financial estimates forwarded to him from Calcutta on 6 January had actually been revised before the end of the financial year, due to a sudden rise in the price of opium, but these revisions had not been made known to him before the new duties had been imposed. Morley, no doubt embarrassed by the political outcry which the duties had caused in Britain, and wishing to protect his *laissez-faire* image, fired a stinging rebuke to Calcutta in which he protested that '...if I had been informed...I should probably have decided to make a really considerable reduction in the tobacco duties'.³¹

²⁹ Minute from L. Abrahams, Financial Secretary at the India Office to the Secretary of State, 24 January 1910, L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

³⁰ Dewey points to Morley's commitment to *laissez-faire* in discussing his unwillingness to sanction the creation of a Department of Industries in Madras when he felt that intervention at the Provincial level was in danger of extending into state ownership of industry. C.J. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 225-26.

³¹ Dispatch from Secretary of State for India to the Governor General of India, Financial No. 60 dated 6 May 1910, L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

Before the end of the year Morley had been replaced as Secretary of State for India by Lord Crewe. However, in the India Office, the Financial Secretary Abrahams continued to monitor the impact of the duties on the volume of imports of tobacco and, more importantly, on the level of tax revenue. These statistics soon made it clear that the increase in revenue predicted by the Government of India's original estimates would prove to be wildly optimistic. Average monthly tobacco imports for the first seven months of the fiscal year of 1910/11 contrasted sharply with those of the two previous years.³² Based on these figures, the Revenue Department of the India Office estimated that the annual receipts from the tobacco levies would amount to £170,280 compared with the Government of India's estimate of £420,000.

Table 3
Average Monthly Tobacco Imports of India, 1908-10 (in lbs.)

	<i>1908/09</i> (lbs)	<i>1909/10</i> (lbs)	<i>Mar-Sept 1910</i> (lbs)
Cigarettes	249,640	256,979	70,080
Unmanufactured Tobacco	101,053	225,438	14,933
Other Tobacco	112,417	127,283	90,287
Total	463,110	609,700	175,300

Source: Finance Dept. L/E/687, India Office.

The shortfall in the revenue derived from tobacco duties put pressure on the Indian government and this was intensified by the need to consider the issue of a countervailing excise. In their response to this question, the Government of India put forward four potential methods of raising revenue against tobacco.³³ These were:

- (i) by a duty on the cultivation;
- (ii) by a government monopoly of the production and manufacture;
- (iii) by the levy of licence fees on the sale;
- (iv) by an excise on the manufacture.

Methods (ii) and (iii) were not felt to be worthy of detailed consideration. A government monopoly, already in existence for salt and opium, was felt to be impractical for tobacco and to cut across the private enterprise/free trade philosophy which the British government espoused, while the

³² In fact, even this estimate understates the impact of the duty on the supply of foreign tobacco entering the Indian market because it ignores the fact that some of the imported goods were placed into bond and subsequently re-exported.

³³ Confidential dispatch from Government of India Finance Dept. to Secretary of State for India, No. 15 of 1911, L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

introduction of a licence fee for vending was considered to be extremely difficult to enforce and, in any case, afforded no effective compensation for the protective element of the new import duties. The two remaining methods, whilst more feasible, also contained serious drawbacks. In the case of the duty on cultivation, the report pointed to the following problems:

- (i) that the unpopularity of the measure may be politically destabilising;
- (ii) that immense practical difficulties would be involved in monitoring and collecting the tax;
- (iii) that cultivation would not be subject to tax in the Native States;
- (iv) that the imposition of duty on tobacco growing would constitute a breach of land revenue arrangements.

The system of taxation based upon land revenues was essentially the backbone of the fiscal support system upon which the government of India rested at this time, although its importance was to diminish as the century wore on (see Table 4). Tampering with this would therefore pose a threat to the financial stability of the entire colonial edifice.

Table 4

*The Distribution of Central and Provincial Tax Revenues for Selected Years
1900-01 to 1946-47 (in per cents)*

Year	Land Revenue	Customs	Excises	Taxes on Income	Salt	Other
1900-1	53	9	10	3	16	9
1917-18	36	18	17	10	9	10
1921-22	27	30	14	15	5	10
1930-31	23	36	13	12	5	11
1940-41	19	28	16	19	5	13
1946-47	7	22	22	37	2	9

Source: D. Kumar, ed., op. cit., Table 12.7

Practical problems of administration and enforcement also attended the other possible means of raising revenue from Indian tobacco directly; that of levying an excise on the manufacture of tobacco goods. In addition, great stress was placed on the damaging impact of such an excise upon the emerging Indian tobacco industry. The cigar industry around Madras, already affected by the higher duty on imported leaf used as wrapper, would, it was argued, either cease production or relocate (as the largest producer had already done) to parts of the country not subject to British rule. Regarding the domestic cigarette manufacturing industry, the Government of India's response to the Secretary of State in London was emphatic:



The Indian cigarette factories have yet to effect improvements in the methods of cultivation and curing; they have to import their machinery, paper, tinfoil, etc., at considerable expense: they have to cope with untrained and indifferent labour; and they have to coax indigenous capital which is shy and easily discouraged by fiscal interference. In our opinion, it would be a serious blunder to burden a young industry of this type with an excise. There is every reason to think that even the smallest duty would cripple it and a duty at all equivalent to the import rates would kill it.³⁴

In addition to the economic effect, the report was equally unequivocal regarding the likely political ramifications of carrying out the proposed introduction of an excise duty:

We are ourselves convinced that, rightly or wrongly, the popular belief would be that the duty is being imposed for the benefit of the British tobacco trade and under pressure of British party politics. The familiar cry would once more be raised that Indian interests have been sacrificed to British interests, and a convenient handle for agitation would be furnished upon which a certain section of political thought would not be slow to seize.³⁵

Along with these arguments against the imposition of any kind of excise tax upon local tobacco production, the response from Calcutta also carried a plea for the retention of the import duties at the levels introduced in March 1910 in order to continue the experiment for another year.

The Government of India's response to the countervailing excise query reached London at the end of January 1911. It was commented upon first by T.W. Holderness, the Under-Secretary for the Revenue and Statistics Department, who accepted that 'the practical objections to imposing countervailing taxation on native tobacco are very great, and that the proposal should not be further pressed'.³⁶ Holderness was also prepared to accept Calcutta's request for the duties to be retained at the existing level for another year, but he referred the matter for comment to Abrahams in the Financial Department who adopted a quite different attitude. Abrahams was particularly critical of the extent to which the Government of India had overestimated the revenue that would be generated by the new duties. Despite their claim that the figures had been framed with 'deliberate

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Internal Minute from T.W. Holderness, Under-Secretary of the Revenue & Statistics Dept. to L. Abrahams, Financial Secretary, India Office, Ref: L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

caution', it was clear that Calcutta had badly underestimated the extent to which the new duties would dislocate India's tobacco import trade and Abrahams was scathing in his criticism:

The Govt. of India have been wrong throughout in dealing with this matter...The natural course at present appears to be that the Secretary of State should take the matter into his own hands, dealing with it in accordance with principles of common sense which if pressed last year, would probably have prevented the ridiculous result that has occurred.³⁷

The Government of India had clearly miscalculated the impact of the duties on tobacco imports and Abrahams was insistent that it should be disciplined. On 14th February 1911 the Secretary of State sent a telegram to Calcutta, informing them that the duties on unmanufactured tobacco should be reduced to one Rupee per lb and other duties adjusted in line with this 'before vested interests are able to spring up under protection of the present high duty'.

The Secretary of State's telegram finally brought into the open the root issue of the tobacco duties question: protectionism. On 9 February, as a rejoinder to their earlier response to the question of the countervailing excise, the Government of India sent a telegram to London in which they outlined the state of development of the cigarette manufacturing industry in Bengal, and in particular the situation concerning the London-registered Peninsular Tobacco Company's factory in Monghyr. Here was clear evidence of the development within India of a modern industry focused on mass consumption, but its continued success was conditional on the absence of an excise:

The future prospects of the business depend upon the extent to which a taste can be created for the cheapest kind of cigarettes composed of country tobacco, and the price at which these are sold renders it impossible that they could bear a heavy duty. The margin of profit will lie in an enormous outturn, and possibly at some future date the trade could bear a light excise. That time however has not yet arrived, and we agree with the Bengal Government that an excise on this young industry at present would be its death-blow.³⁸

The rapid growth of a cigarette industry 'under the fostering care of the new duties' was seen by Holderness, the Under-Secretary in the Revenue

³⁷ Reply from Abrahams to Holderness (see note 56), Ref: L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 234/11, I.O.R.

³⁸ Confidential dispatch from the Finance Dept. of the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, No. 44 of 1911, Ref: L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 501/11, I.O.R.

Department in London, as evidence of a policy by the Government of India to develop Swadeshi industries 'through protectionism by stages which is not the present policy of the U.K. government'.³⁹

BAT's Response to the Duties

The debate over the Indian customs duties placed BAT in a very curious position. Clearly, the tariff adversely affected the company's export trade but, as an essentially international business, BAT was already operating inside the tariff wall through its Peninsular subsidiary. In the long run the company's strategic objective in India was not damaged as much by the rise in the customs duty as it would have been by the imposition of a counter-vailing excise on tobacco manufacturing which could, quite possibly, have wrecked BAT's entire marketing strategy based on very low priced cigarettes. As a method of raising government revenue from tobacco, therefore, the imposition of a duty on imported tobacco certainly represented the lesser of two evils as far as BAT were concerned.

Nevertheless, the customs duties did present significant problems to BAT's operation in India and their reduction in 1911 could only have been greeted with relief. Despite the fact that BAT had built their own plant in India, the cigarettes manufactured there at this stage still relied heavily on imported American leaf. As the manager of the Monghyr factory explained to the local press at the time, the duty on unmanufactured leaf of Rs. 2 per lb would hit the cheapest cigarettes severely. At the old *ad valorem* rate of 5 per cent, certain brands of cigarettes could be supplied to dealers for as little as Re. 1 per thousand, tax included. Following the changes, the 2.5 lbs of tobacco contained in these one thousand cigarettes attracted a duty of Rs. 5 and thus raised the price to dealers to Rs. 6 per thousand; a price increase of 500 per cent.⁴⁰ It is thus hardly surprising to find that BAT's voice was prominent amongst the chorus of protest which was directed at the India Office at the time of the imposition of the new rates. Interviewed at the time, Percy Ogden, a BAT director based in Liverpool, made it known that the duties were very likely to lead directly to the dismissal of 650 workers at the company's factories in Liverpool and Bristol whose jobs were directly related to the Indian market.⁴¹ In addition, numerous

³⁹ Internal Minute from T.W. Holderness to Secretary of State, Ref: L/E/7/687; R & S Dept. File No. 501/11, I.O.R.

⁴⁰ Note that the figures quoted here relate to the proposed level of the duties rather than those actually implemented. Also, some of the tobacco used in these cigarettes, even at this time, would have been the country variety and thus not subject to the duty. This, and other information relating to BAT's response to the new scale of duties, is contained in an interview with the manager of BAT's Calcutta branch, Mr J. Austin, in the *Pioneer Mail*, 6 May 1910, p. 13.

⁴¹ *Tobacco*, 352, April 1910, p. 47. Note that an update in this journal suggests that the strength of demand in BAT's other overseas markets, notably China, allowed the company to avoid actually shedding labour, at least from its factory in Bristol.

questions were raised in the Parliament and a group of M.P.s from Bristol pressed the Secretary of State for India for some ameliorative action on the duties.⁴²

Political lobbying was one means by which British tobacco interests sought to counter the measures. In addition, BAT possessed considerable power to directly influence the success of the new duties in raising revenue as a result of the company's virtual monopoly of cigarette imports to India.⁴³ This monopoly control of the cigarette trade allowed BAT to severely restrict the Government of India's receipts from the new duties. The manager of BAT's Calcutta branch revealed in a newspaper interview that, at the time of the announcement of the new rates, BAT had placed 60 to 70 million cigarettes consigned to India into bond as soon as they arrived. Subsequently, 35 million were shipped on to China and 25 million were sent back to the factory at Bristol.⁴⁴ Whatever the cost involved for BAT in shipping these cigarettes elsewhere, the decision to do so was instrumental in helping to destroy the credibility of the Government of India's revenue estimates in the eyes of the India Office and forcing a reduction in the rates in 1911.

Nevertheless, the imposition of the duty also seems to have been a factor in persuading the company to consolidate their activities within India. The development of local production facilities had now become imperative and during 1910 BAT took a number of important steps towards the creation of an Indian-based sales and production network which would rival their massive operation in China. The first of these was to establish the company's legal presence within India by setting up a Calcutta-registered company, called the Imperial Tobacco Company of India, which became the holding company for BAT's entire marketing network in India and which by 1920 also embraced BAT's manufacturing and leaf operations.⁴⁵ The decision to register a Rupee-denominated subsidiary placed BAT in the forefront among those companies who invested directly in India and, in this respect, BAT may be considered as the first multinational business to engage in direct investment in India.⁴⁶

⁴² *Tobacco*, loc. cit., p. 47. At this interview, Morley agreed to pursue the possibility of raising a countervailing excise on local produce.

⁴³ In a report to the US government on the state of the tobacco trade in India during 1909, the American Consul in Bombay had noted that "The British-American Tobacco Company practically controls the import trade of this commodity in India... There is a large import of cigarettes solely under its control." Reported in the *Indian Trade Journal*, 15(188), 4 November 1909, p. 133.

⁴⁴ *Pioneer Mail*, 6 May 1910, p. 13.

⁴⁵ The changing structure of BAT in India is well summarised in ITC's commissioned history, C. Basu, op. cit., pp. 68-73.

⁴⁶ BAT's pioneering status in this respect is supported by Tomlinson's study of foreign private investment in India in which he lists foreign subsidiaries which had Rs. 10 lakhs paid-up ordinary share capital by 1950. Although this list is not comprehensive, ITC (BAT's Indian

A second decision prompted by the new scale of duties was to adopt a much higher profile in local leaf procurement. Purchasing of local Bihar leaf had begun as soon as the Monghyr factory commenced operations in 1908 but it soon became apparent that the leaf required further treatment before it could be packed without becoming mouldy. For this purpose BAT set up two redrying plants in Bihar during 1908–10 using the old indigo factories.⁴⁷ In 1912 this operation was consolidated by the establishment of another, more substantial plant at Dalsing Serai under the auspices of a newly formed, Calcutta-registered company called the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development (ILTD) Co. Ltd.⁴⁸ From this point on, the company actively began to encourage the growing of tobacco in India, principally through the advancing of credit, the distribution of seedlings and the provision of advice and support for new cultivators; indeed, many of the functions promoted by the Government of India's New Industrial Policy.

Initially, the new ILTD company was managed by the ex-American Tobacco leaf expert, R.C. Harrison, but when he was transferred back to the U.S.-based leaf-buying company in 1915 his place was taken by an Englishman, D.W. Murdoch.⁴⁹ ILTD quickly discovered that the tobacco grown in the south of India was cured in a way which was superior to that practised in Bihar and as early as 1911 BAT had begun to seriously explore the area of Guntur in Andhra Pradesh.⁵⁰ Buying depots were set up there and in the early 1920s a redrying plant was established at Chilara which subsequently became the headquarters of the ILTD Co. Partly to take advantage of the superior South Indian leaf, and partly to expand output in India itself following the imposition of the new scale of duties, BAT commissioned a second factory in 1912 at Bangalore and this began operating the following year as part of the Peninsular Tobacco Co., employing a local workforce of 400.⁵¹

holding company) represents the first of these 41 companies to register a Rupee-denominated Indian subsidiary. See B.R. Tomlinson, 'Foreign Private Investment in India', op. cit., Appendix II.

⁴⁷ C. Basu op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁸ BAT's leaf development in India is outlined in detail in a booklet published by the company itself, around 1942, in which it highlighted the role of the ILTD Co. in developing an extensive tobacco leaf export trade for India by the time of the outbreak of World War II. Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Co. Ltd., *Indian Tobacco Leaves: Story of Co-operation in India*, London, n.d.

⁴⁹ This move was consistent with a growing preponderance of English rather than American managers who were placed in control of BAT's Asian operations after 1911 when the company became majority British-owned and Imperial Tobacco became the largest single shareholder. Murdoch had joined BAT as a pupil at their Ashton Gate plant in 1905 and first went to India in 1907. He became the second in command in India under Page when ILTD was absorbed by ITC (India) in 1919. *BAT Bulletin*, 12(22), February 1922, p. 486 and 12(23), March 1922, p. 523.

⁵⁰ C. Basu, op. cit., pp. 47–49.

⁵¹ C. Basu, op. cit., p. 38.

By the end of the First World War then, BAT had established in India a national distribution network for cigarettes, supported by two large factories and an expanding leaf procurement organisation. When these operations were brought together under the umbrella of the Imperial Tobacco Company (India) Ltd., in 1919, the authorised share capital of the whole organisation was put at Rs. 500 lakhs.⁵² In contrast, BAT's main domestic rival, the East India Cigarette Co., was taken over by Howeson Bros., an expatriate firm whose main interests lay in the jute industry, and refloated as the British India Tobacco Co. with a capital value of Rs. 30 lakhs. Its attempt to compete with BAT, however, was unable to survive a cigarette boycott which was part of the Nationalists' Non Cooperation Movement of 1920/21.⁵³ Another rival of BAT, the indigenous Calcutta Cigarette Co., floated in 1919 with a capital value of Rs. 5,00,000, met with a similar fate. BAT themselves countered the cigarette boycott with extravagant marketing schemes, involving one competition which alone distributed a total in prize money of Rs. 50,000.⁵⁴ Considering that the annual profit of the Calcutta Cigarette Co. had amounted only to Rs. 78,094 in 1920 and Rs. 40,642 the previous year, while the profits of the British India Cigarette Co. had been Rs. 1,57,008 for the 17 months ending January 1921 it is hardly surprising to find that neither of these rivals were able to seriously compete with BAT.⁵⁵

Conclusion

In drawing together the various threads from this episode it is important to bear in mind Tomlinson's cautionary remarks concerning the limited role of business history in understanding the dynamics of Indian economic history more generally. Obviously, it would be foolish to expect to generate wide-ranging conclusions from the study of an individual firm's experience. But

⁵² Tomlinson's figures put the starting paid-up capital of the organisation at Rs. 461 lakhs. By 1950, although the paid-up capital had not increased from its original level, ITC's capital was still well in excess of its nearest rival, Glaxo Laboratories Ltd. (Rs. 200 lakhs). B.R. Tomlinson, 'Foreign Private Investment in India', op. cit., Appendix II.

⁵³ The decision by Howeson to buy out and refloat the East India Company provides a certain amount of intrigue. The memoirs of R.G. Baker, who later became Chairman of ITC, make it clear that a number of BAT's staff, himself included, were offered positions with better salaries to work at The East India Company's factory at Dum Dum — an offer which was certainly taken up by some employees and allowed Baker to negotiate a higher salary with London. The memoirs also indicate that Howeson's Chairman was a good friend of BAT's Deputy Chairman Hugo Cunliffe-Owen and suggest that he may have had 'a finger' in the new venture. One possible explanation may be that it enabled BAT to buy out the East India Company indirectly. Disaffected BAT employees who found conditions at the Dum Dum factory not to their liking were re-employed by BAT and transferred to the Bangalore factory. Baker, op. cit.

⁵⁴ *BAT Bulletin*, 12(18), November 1921, pp. 435-36.

⁵⁵ *Investor's India Yearbook*, Nos. 9,10,11 (1919-21).

what the history of such firms can do, as Tomlinson points out, is to help illuminate certain aspects of the larger socio-economic historical canvas upon which their activities are painted.⁵⁶ And in this respect, the experience of BAT in India offers a number of telling insights.

First and foremost, the case serves to indicate the potentially galvanising effect on industrial development that the Government of India's New Industrial Policy was capable of generating in the years before the outbreak of World War I. Whilst it cannot be doubted that the Swadeshi movement had spurred BAT to set up manufacturing facilities before 1910, it is equally clear that the process was accelerated by the Indian government's policies; most notably the tariff policy. The tariff was instrumental both in causing BAT to build a second factory in India so soon after the first, and in persuading them to take more active steps in the development of local cigarette leaf tobacco.

The tariff issue also highlights the extent to which it was possible for opinions to diverge between London and Calcutta on the question of economic policy for India. The documentary evidence available in the records of the India Office serve to illustrate graphically the degree to which certain individuals in London opposed industrialisation in India; particularly from behind a tariff wall. It is revealing to contrast the damning remarks of Abrahams and Holderness at the India Office with the statement of the Finance Minister to the Indian government, Sir Fleetwood Wilson, when introducing the new tariffs to the Imperial Legislative Council: 'I think Swadeshi is good; and if the outcome of the changes I have laid before the Council result in some encouragement of Indian industries I for one shall not regret it'.⁵⁷ Certainly the Indian press were left in little doubt that no countervailing excise would be introduced to offset the protective impact of the new duties.⁵⁸ The exchange between London and Calcutta on the tobacco duties question provides a particularly apposite example of politicians responding to different sets of pressures, with the resultant policy emerging in an almost incidental manner. For the Indian government, the imposition of the tariff presented at least a token measure to offer the Indian members of the Legislative Assembly, and hence the Indian educated class in general, who were pressing for the protection of Indian industry

⁵⁶ B.R. Tomlinson, 'British Business in India, 1860-1970' in R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and G.G. Jones, eds., op. cit., Chap. 4.

⁵⁷ Reported by the trade journal *Tobacco* from an item in the *Madras Standard. Tobacco*, 353, May 1910, p. 42.

⁵⁸ Both the *Madras Standard*, noted above, and *The Englishman* of Calcutta carried reports which cast doubt on the possibility of the Indian government introducing a countervailing excise on tobacco. Indeed, *The Englishman* carried an air of officialdom when it stated that: 'So far as we have been able to ascertain the facts we believe that the Government of India have no intention of imposing countervailing duties on tobacco and cigarettes in India' Reported in *Tobacco*, loc. cit., p. 42.

against British interests. For London, opposition to the duties was an acknowledgement of the need to keep the Indian market free from obstruction in order to facilitate the continued flow of British exports and maintain Britain's trade surplus with India. That the ultimate balance of forces left the policy tilted towards Indian interests proved to be a portent of the future. Following the outbreak of war in Europe, Indian demands for tariff protection could no longer be resisted by a British government which now found itself calling upon the Indian army for support in the conflict.

In 1916, the general tariff was raised from 5 to 7.5 per cent, and again in 1921 to 11 per cent. In October 1921, the Indian government appointed a Fiscal Commission and in its report of July 1922 the Commission recommended the use of discriminating protection and the formation of an Indian Tariff Board, which was duly set up the following July.⁵⁹

However, as the case of BAT illustrates, the emergence of international business institutions changed the nature of the tariff question in the twentieth century. Tariffs alone were no longer adequate to protect a market from foreign invasion; a fact to which the Japanese government were acutely aware in their dealings with BAT at the turn of the century.⁶⁰ This is not to deny that the Indian Tariff Board enabled India to protect a number of her primary industries from the ravages of the depression during the 1930s. But foreign firms, principally originating from Britain, made substantial inroads into many areas of Indian business after the erection of tariffs by setting up operations in India itself during the inter-war period. BAT's establishment of an Indian subsidiary company in 1910 thus represented the beginning of a wave of foreign investment in India which was overseen, if not actively encouraged, by the colonial government.⁶¹ In its wake, it brought to India

⁵⁹ See I.M. Drummond, *British Economic Policy and the Empire 1919-1939*, London, 1972, pp. 122-26.

⁶⁰ The favourable trade treaties imposed upon Japan made this country one of the first markets that the cigarette manufacturers of Britain and America targeted in their attempts to develop foreign outlets for their new product. When, in 1899, the Japanese government substantially raised the tariff on cigarettes, the American Tobacco Co. responded by purchasing the controlling interest in Japan's largest producer, the Murai Brothers Co. The strategy was an enormous success for American Tobacco, generating high profits which were channelled back to the USA. However, in 1904, the government of Japan ended American direct involvement in the cigarette industry by expropriating every existing private cigarette firm, including the Murai Brothers, and created the Japanese Imperial Tobacco Monopoly. See S. Cochran, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

⁶¹ Drummond points out that the British government made spasmodic and purely verbal attempts to convince British industrialists that they should set up more branch plants overseas, and should cooperate with Empire industrialists. A certain segment of political thought in Britain during the 1930s, led by Lord Beaverbrook, argued strongly for Empire Free Trade and it is clear that the Empire emerged as a trading block, centred on Britain, more and more during these years. I.M. Drummond, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-34. It is interesting to note that the successor to James Duke as Chairman of BAT in 1923, Hugo Cunliffe-Owen, was strongly identified with Beaverbrook's campaign. See J.D. Jeremy, ed., *Directory of Business Biography*, London, 1986, pp. 865-69.

Mortality and migrant labour en route to Assam, 1863–1924

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When they found in the late 1850s that there was insufficient local labour to develop the tea gardens in Assam, the plantation owners turned to an indentured labour system drawing on people from north India. This initially involved transportation of labour from their villages to depots in Bengal, and from there by river boats to the tea gardens in the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys. It is common knowledge that large numbers of people died en route to Assam, as in similar large-scale movements of bonded or free labour elsewhere. And, as elsewhere, there was an improvement over the course of the last half of the nineteenth century. But how dangerous was it to travel as a labourer to the tea gardens? Just how much did it improve during the nineteenth century, and why? And what does a discussion of this migration add to the general discussion of mortality during migration?

The main labour catchment areas for the Assam tea gardens were Chotanagpur, the North Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar and Bengal, and as recruits had to be registered and medically inspected in their homelands and in transshipment depots, an administrative apparatus was created which enabled the collection of a wealth of information on the en route mortality suffered by labour migrants. These statistics were presented in the Annual Reports of Labour Immigration into Assam, which were published from 1877 in Shillong (Assam); the Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, which were published from 1875/76 in Calcutta; the Annual Administrative Reports of Bengal and Assam; and the Annual Sanitary Reports of Assam.

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Despite the availability of these data, the historians of labour migrants in the Assam tea gardens have devoted little attention to the en route mortality suffered by these migrants.¹ They have not systematically and comprehensively quantified this mortality, and they appear not to have consulted the main source on this mortality, namely, the Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

This paper presents the first systematic and comprehensive quantitative analysis of the en route mortality suffered by labour migrants to Assam between 1864 and 1924. More generally, the paper attempts to contribute to the literatures on (a) labour migration to Assam, (b) the history of Indian health, and (c) the links between mortality and migration.

Routes

Initially, the recruits and their dependants for the tea gardens in Brahmaputra valley and Surma valley (in the districts of Sylhet and Cachar) were required to travel via Calcutta. They usually reached Calcutta by rail, and were detained in depots for a couple of weeks while they were registered and medically inspected (see Table 2).² They were then forwarded on the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Kooshtea (Kushtia), on river Ganga, for embarkation by large commercial steamers up river Brahmaputra, or by small country boats up river Meghna to the districts of Sylhet and Cachar, though some commercial steamers were also used on this route. Whereas commercial steamers usually conveyed between about 200 to 300 passengers, country boats usually only conveyed about 20. In 1872, the Eastern Bengal State Railway was extended from Kushtia to Goalundo (also on the Ganga), and Goalundo replaced Kushtia as the port of embarkation for the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys.³

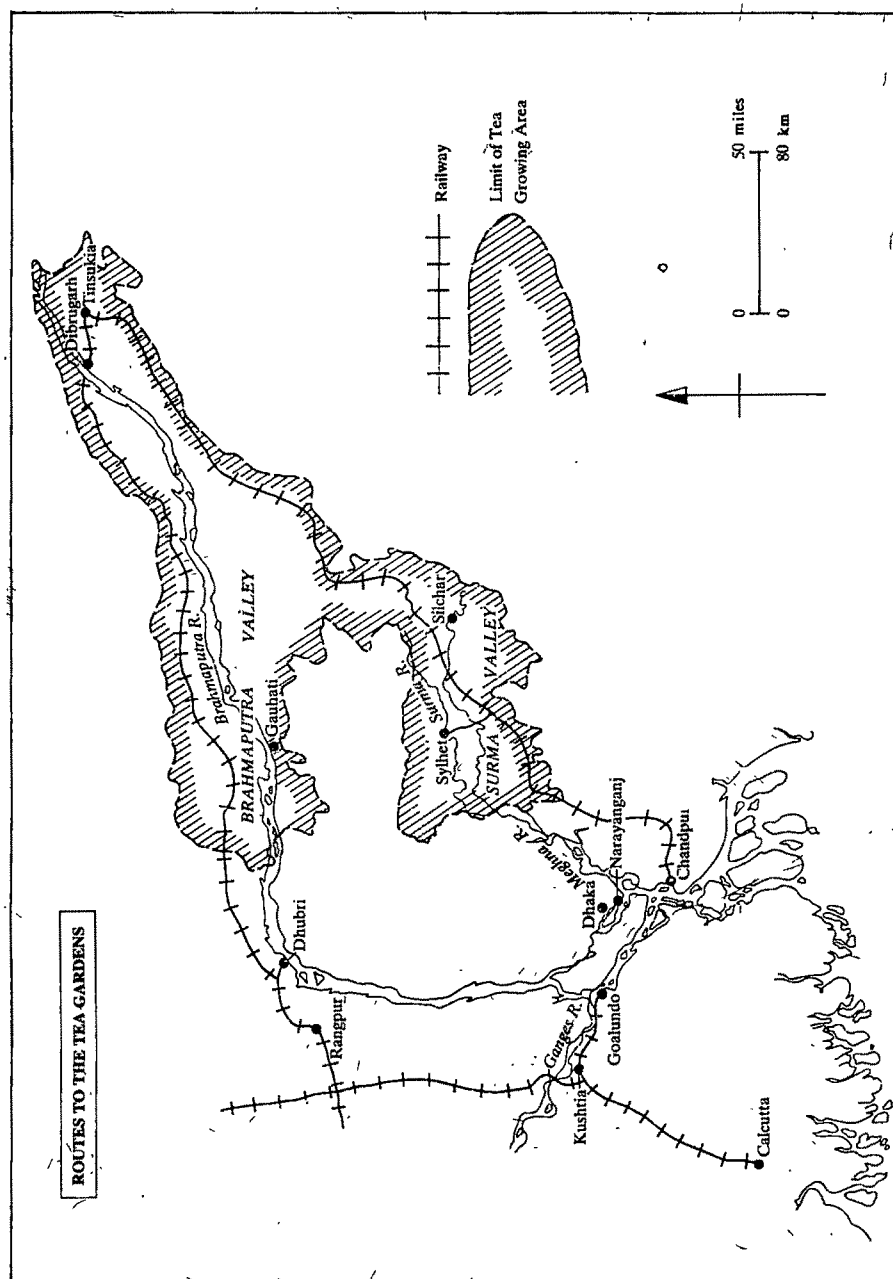
In 1875, Dhubri (on the Brahmaputra) was made into an emigration port of embarkation, obviating the need for recruits for the Brahmaputra valley to go via Calcutta and the river journey from Goalundo to Dhubri. There were a number of ways in which recruits travelled to Dhubri: some went by train to Rajmahal, and walked from there to Dhubri; others went via

¹ Ranjani K. Das, *Plantation Labour in India*, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 102-3; Sardar M. Akhtar, *Emigrant Labour for Assam Tea Gardens*, Lahore, 1939, pp. 33-34, 76-77.

² On the average period of detention, see also Bengal Administration Report (hereinafter BAR), 1877/78, p. 389. The decline in the average period of detention in the Calcutta depots after 1878/79 is probably explained, in part, by the commencement of the regular bi-weekly despatch of recruits from the Calcutta depots in 1879/80. In addition, the decline in loss rates after 1878/79 probably meant that there were fewer sick recruits who needed to be detained.

³ In 1876/77, the period of detention in the Goalundo depots was 24 hours if recruits had previously passed through a depot in Calcutta, while it was four days for those who had not; BAR, 1876/77, p. 315. See also Annual Report on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet (hereinafter ARIE), 1878/79, p. 14.

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Calcutta, taking the Eastern Bengal State Railway from Calcutta to Dhubri, via Rangpur.

The journey by commercial steamer (towing flats on which the emigrants were housed), took roughly two to three weeks from Goalundo to Dibrugarh, the last port of disembarkation in the Brahmaputra valley (see Tables 3–5).⁴ (In 1883, it was estimated that the journey from Goalundo to Dhubri took about four to six days, and the journey from Dhubri to Dibrugarh about 12 to 14 days.)⁵ The journey by country boats to the Surma valley took longer, usually over three weeks (see Table 6).⁶ In 1885, commercial steamers started to replace country boats on the route to the Surma valley, reducing the length of the voyage to about two weeks (see Table 6). Recruits either travelled entirely by steamer, or were forwarded as far as Fenchuganj (in the district of Sylhet) by steamer, and then by country boat to their destination.

In 1883, fast daily mail steamers were introduced on the route between Dhubri and Dibrugarh, reducing the length of the voyage from over 12 days to about five days. In 1887, these daily mail steamers were also introduced on the journey from Goalundo to Dhubri, and by the close of the 1880s, most recruits going to the Surma valley took a commercial steamer from Goalundo to Naraingunge (Narayanganj), and from there a daily mail steamer (see Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6). Not only did the switch from commercial steamers to daily mail steamers reduce the length of the voyage, but it also reduced the average period of detention in the depots at Goalundo and Dhubri.

In 1903, railway routes from Dhubri and Chandpur (via Tinsukia) were opened as alternative routes to the Brahmaputra valley, but most recruits continued to travel by steamer. By 1904, however, most recruits for the Surma valley travelled by steamer from Goalundo to Chandpur, and took the Assam-Bengal Railway.

The changing modes of transporting recruits from country boats to commercial steamers to daily mail steamers to railways, brought about a stage-by-stage reduction in the length of the journey from the recruits' homelands to their place of work, and hence in the period of time when they were at risk of death.

Evidence

There are a number of deficiencies in the available evidence bearing on the

⁴ W.N. Lees, *A Memorandum Written After a Tour Through the Tea Districts of Eastern Bengal in 1864–65*, Calcutta, 1866, pp. 72–73; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State and Prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868, p. 30; BAR, 1874/75, p. 404; Annual Sanitary Report of the Province of Assam, 1877, p. 20; 1878, p. 11.

⁵ Annual Report on Labour Immigration into Assam (hereinafter ARL), 1883, p. 2.

⁶ ARL, 1883, p. 3; 1886, p. 2; 1891, p. 7.

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Table 1

Age Distribution of Emigrants Despatched from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys, 1864/65–1870/71, 1875/76–1910/11

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Children %</i>	<i>Infants %</i>
1864–65	28,282	7.7	3.6
1865–66	44,582	12.7	9.0
1866–67	12,487	12.0	6.0
1867–68	8,933	11.4	5.8
1868–69	12,509	9.5	4.5
1869–70	5,360	9.2	6.9
1870–71	4,863	8.0	7.1
1875–76	26,924	17.3	6.5
1877–78	29,163	20.9	8.0
1878–79	22,630	27.7	9.4
1879–80	9,865	23.1	6.4
1880–81	4,795	13.8	4.4
1881*	3,463	9.7	4.2
1882	7,973	13.3	4.7
1883	8,571	9.1	4.1
1884	6,724	18.6	7.2
1885	3,751	15.7	6.7
1886	2,559	15.3	4.0
1887	2,390	11.3	4.0
1888	3,183	27.3	5.6
1889	2,852	24.1	5.4
1890	11,049	25.2	5.2
1891	16,173	23.3	6.2
1892	16,871	24.5	6.3
1893	17,747	26.3	7.2
1894	17,027	24.8	6.5
1895	32,877	19.8	6.1
1896	24,429	20.1	6.4
1897	38,070	23.5	8.3
1898	27,480	24.4	6.7
1899	19,085	17.6	4.9
1900	39,043	24.0	7.7
1901	19,024	20.4	6.1
1902†	17,191	24.4	5.6
1902–3	22,594	23.1	4.8
1903–4	15,332	17.2	4.2
1904–5	11,439	19.9	5.7
1905–6	15,764	19.4	7.9
1906–7	8,467	18.0	7.1
1907–8	24,080	20.0	8.5
1908–9	22,100	16.6	8.4
1909–10	12,805	10.9	5.8
1910–11	33,962	12.5	5.2

Table 1 (Contd.)

Year	Total	Children %	Infants %
1864/65-1870/71	117,016	10.6	6.5
1875/76-1879/80	88,582	21.8	7.7
1880/81-1889	46,261	14.9	5.1
1890-1899	220,808	22.6	6.6
1900-1910/11	241,801	19.2	6.5

* Apr.-Dec.

† Jan.-June.

Note: From 1864-65 to 1870-71, emigrants despatched from Calcutta depots; from 1875-76, emigrants despatched from Goalundo. Children defined as from 2 to 15 years; infants as under 2 years. From 1911-12, the data on children and infants were combined, and so are not reported here.

Sources: Bengal Administrative Reports; Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

Table 2
Mortality in Calcutta Depots, 1864/65-1914/15

Year	Number Accommodated	Deaths		Loss Rate %
		Total	Cholera	
1864-65	30,858	367	256	1.19
1865-66	48,033	1,182	826	2.46
1866-67	13,540	571	137	4.22
1867-68	9,681	250	71	2.58
1868-69	13,955	77	50	0.55
1869-70	6,340	30	-	0.47
1870-71	5,118	26	-	0.50
1871-72	9,033	23	19	0.25
1872-73	-	-	-	0.34
1873-74	15,006	63	-	0.42
1874-75	14,030	75	18	0.53
1875-76	23,534	87	35	0.37
1876-77	19,476	95	-	0.49
1877-78	24,068	315	202	1.31
1878-79	26,494	602	468	2.27
1879-80	12,278	82	53	0.67
1880-81	6,001	8	0	0.13
1881*	4,428	3	0	0.07
1882	6,407	12	4	0.19
1883	7,246	9	3	0.12
1884	5,083	31	11	0.61
1885	4,444	14	5	0.32
1886	3,108	7	1	0.23
1887	3,014	4	0	0.13
1888	1,372	3	0	0.22
1889†	1,829	5	1	0.27
1890	5,189	5	1	0.10
1891	8,731	18	4	0.21

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Table 2 (Contd.)

Year	Number Accommodated	Deaths		Loss Rate %
		Total	Cholera	
1892	5,023	27	9	0.54
1893	4,646	3	0	0.06
1894	3,246	9	3	0.28
1895	3,738	7	0	0.19
1896	4,243	6	0	0.14
1897	5,382	37	15	0.69
1898	2,956	3	0	0.10
1899	2,301	2	0	0.09
1900	1,494	1	0	0.07
1901	1,805	2	0	0.11
1902†	1,456	0	0	0
1902–3	4,091	5	4	0.12
1903–4	4,662	5	3	0.11
1904–5	2,092	4	0	0.19
1905–6	1,902	1	0	0.05
1906–7	1,083	3	0	0.28
1907–8	6,123	22	10	0.36
1908–9	5,840	14	0	0.24
1909–10	5,092	1	0	0.02
1910–11	5,695	3	0	0.05
1911–12	1,955	2	1	0.10
1912–13	919	1	0	0.11
1913–14	943	4	1	0.42
1914–15	394	0	0	0

* Apr.–Dec.

† Jan.–June

Note: The data for 1865–66 are exclusive of infants. The average number of days that emigrants were detained in the depots was reported in the following years: 14 days (1875–76), 15 days (1877–78), 12 days (1878–79), 9 days (1879–80), 9 days (1880–81), and 10 days (Apr.–Dec. 1881). The statistics for 1864–65 to 1866–67 were revised in the Bengal Administrative Report for 1867–68, p. 167. Statistics on deaths in Calcutta depots between 1864 and 1867 were also reported in Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State and Prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868, p. 28. Blanks indicate that data are not available.

Sources: Bengal Administrative Reports; Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

Table 3

Mortality on Voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra Valley, 1863/64–1900

Year	Number Embarked	Deaths		Loss Rate (%)	Length (days)
		Total	Cholera		
1863–64	4,558	72	—	1.58	—
1864–65	11,768	470	400	4.00	—
1865–66	27,761	1,177	871	4.24	—
1866–67	7,901	319	230	4.04	—
1867–68	2,902	114	74	3.92	—
1868–69	7,074	132	102	1.87	—

Table 3 (Contd.)

Year	Number Embarked	Deaths		Loss Rate (%)	Length (days)
		Total	Cholera		
1869-70	5,360	90	—	1.68	—
1870-71	—	—	—	0.65	—
1871-72	4,697	153	—	3.26	—
1872-73	—	—	—	1.93	—
1873-74	14,387	432	—	3.00	—
1874-75	11,034	362	221	3.28	19.5
1875-76	16,464	280	190	1.70	15.7
1876-77	14,646	219	—	1.46	16.8
1877-78	17,366	468	297	2.69	18.7
1878-79	16,495	624	422	3.78	15.9
1879-80	6,333	67	40	1.05	15.6
1880-81	3,294	3	0	0.09	15.4
1881	3,341	6	0	0.17	15.6
1882	3,689	27	21	0.73	16.9
1883	3,908	16	13	0.40	17.0
1884	2,890	24	13	0.83	15.8
1885	2,543	7	5	0.27	15.0
1886	984	3	2	0.30	12.3
1887	859	2	1	0.23	7.0
1888	2,551	11	7	0.43	7.4
1889	1,763	3	3	0.17	6.5
1890	7,629	17	13	0.22	7.4
1891	11,776	38	30	0.32	7.5
1892	11,396	55	45	0.48	7.5
1893	24,834	5	5	0.02	7.3
1894	24,337	40	25	0.16	7.7
1895	33,478	102	85	0.30	7.2
1896	35,601	291	268	0.82	7.5
1897	53,419	325	291	0.61	7.7
1898	32,534	53	41	0.16	7.0
1899	26,172	31	21	0.12	6.5
1900	46,635	201	175	0.43	6.4

Note: Up to 1872, emigrants embarked at Kushtia. Blanks indicate that data are not available.

Sources: Bengal Administrative Reports; Assam Administrative Reports; Assam Sanitary Reports; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State and Prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868, pp. 29-30; Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

Table 4

Mortality in Goalundo Depots and on Voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra Valley, 1881-1923/24

	1881-89	1890-99	1900- 1909/10	1910/11- 1923/24
Arrived in Depots	22,604	168,270	182,360	440,700
Depot Deaths:				
Total	22	78	94	444
Cholera	16	64	91	104

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Table 4 (Contd.)

	1881–89	1890–99	1900– 1909/10	1910/11– 1923/24
Voyage Deaths:				
Total	100	759	320	523
Cholera	65	659	253	245
Loss Rates (%):				
Depots	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.10
Voyages	0.44	0.45	0.18	0.12
Average Voyage Length (days)	12.6	7.3	6.2	8.1

Note: As the above data were extracted from a different section of the Annual Reports on Inland Emigration than the data in Table 3, there are some (unexplained) differences. The average voyage length between Goalundo and Dibrugarh, the final landing station in Assam, was derived by taking a simple average of the annual averages.

Source: Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

Table 5
Mortality on Voyages from Dhubri to the
Brahmaputra valley, 1875/76–1900

Year	Number Embarked	Deaths		Loss Rate (%)
		Total	Cholera	
1875/76	2,430	30	—	1.23
1876/77	3,593	32	—	0.89
1877/78	7,903	136	—	1.72
1878/79	6,995	170	—	2.43
1879/80	6,578	39	—	0.59
1880/81	6,974	20	—	0.29
1881	3,646	6	—	0.16
1882	—	—	—	0.62
1883	20,690	138	—	0.67
1884	26,040	68	—	0.26
1885	18,046	24	—	0.13
1886	17,934	14	—	0.08
1887	25,635	24	16	0.09
1888	31,217	171	150	0.55
1889	33,872	111	90	0.33
1890	16,781	4	2	0.02
1891	19,552	30	19	0.15
1892	24,517	62	48	0.25
1893	22,141	11	3	0.05
1894	21,314	35	31	0.16
1895	13,019	21	17	0.16
1896	22,671	77	57	0.34
1897	34,530	179	154	0.52
1898	9,456	5	4	0.05
1899	7,135	4	2	0.06
1900	10,021	16	14	0.16

Table 5 (Contd.)

Note: In 1883, the average length of the voyage was 14 days. In 1884, 21,497 out of the 26,040 went by daily mail steamers which took 5 days, while the remainder went by the larger commercial steamers which took 12.5 days. The average length in 1887 was 5.5 days. Blanks indicate that data are unavailable.

Sources: Bengal Administrative Reports; Assam Administrative Reports; Assam Sanitary Reports; Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet; Annual Reports on Labour Immigration into Assam.

Table 6
*Mortality on Voyages from Goalundo to the Districts of
Cachar and Sylhet, 1863/64-1898*

Year	Number Embarked	Deaths		Loss Rate (%)	Length (days)
		Total	Cholera		
1863-64	11,249	446	—	3.96	—
1864-65	16,514	436	364	2.64	—
1865-66	16,821	1,097	1,004	6.52	—
1866-67	4,586	252	92	5.50	—
1867-68	5,190	374	325	7.21	—
1868-69	5,435	174	148	3.21	—
1869-70	5,360	90	—	1.68	—
1870-71	1,372	20	—	1.46	—
1871-72	2,325	40	—	1.72	—
1873-74	10,460	288	—	2.75	—
1875-76	10,420	278	209	2.67	—
1877-78	11,797	508	479	4.31	—
1878-79	6,135	234	217	3.81	23.0
1879-80	3,532	96	89	2.72	—
1880-81	2,266	54	34	2.38	—
1881	3,034	59	51	1.95	—
1882	4,200	108	102	2.57	—
1883	4,663	43	36	0.92	—
1884	3,823	133	131	3.48	21.0
1885	1,186	15	11	1.26	14.0
1886	1,584	18	14	1.14	—
1887	1,531	15	14	0.98	17.0
1888	632	4	1	0.63	11.5
1889	1,089	1	0	0.09	8.5
1890	3,420	33	26	0.96	8.5
1891	4,390	38	32	0.87	8.5
1892	5,441	29	22	0.53	8.1
1893	5,898	4	1	0.07	6.8
1894	5,635	10	9	0.18	5.0
1895	10,632	4	3	0.04	4.6
1896	5,555	7	4	0.13	5.5
1897	7,288	1	1	0.01	3.9
1898	3,196	0	0	0	4.1

Note: Blanks indicate that data are not available.

Sources: Bengal Administrative Reports; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the State and Prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868, pp. 29-30; Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

mortality suffered by recruits en route to the tea gardens. First, the evidence is not comprehensive, as many recruits bypassed the transshipment depots, and so no information was collected on their mortality. In 1883, for example, it was reported 'that persons recruited in the North-Western Provinces sometimes travel the whole way down the Ganges and past Goalundo in boats, a journey which takes about three months....'⁷ For those recruits who were registered for transmission by depots, reasonably comprehensive data are available on their mortality in depots and on voyages from the depots to their places of employment, but less information is available on the journey from their homelands to the depots.

Second, although it is difficult to evaluate the reliability of the reported mortality statistics, it can be suggested that they were only *lower* bounds on the true figures because some (many?) deaths undoubtedly went unreported. In addition, many of those who were rejected in the depots as medically unfit, probably died on the journey home, and their deaths would not have been included in the official mortality statistics. This bias in the official statistics was recognised by a contemporary government official:

In considering the question of mortality among the coolies recruited, some margin must probably be allowed in reference to those who are 'left behind'. In the death-rates of the reports they cannot well be included; yet it is much to be feared that some of those who are reported to be left behind do not survive to return to their homes.⁸

In the 1860s and 1870s, there were a number of instances when the reported number of deaths, and the associated loss rate, in a particular year differed among sources. Some of these discrepancies probably were due to revisions in the statistics on the basis of more complete information. When different estimates were reported in different sources, the procedure adopted in compiling the statistical body of evidence used in this paper was to select the latest and/or highest estimate.

A third deficiency in the body of evidence on mortality en route to the tea gardens is that *complete* information is not available on mortality by age category and by region of origin, nor on the period of time in which recruits were at risk. Information on mortality by age category (adults, children, and infants) is only available for recruits during their detention in the depots at Goalundo, and during their voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys between 1881 and 1910/11 (see Table 7). Information on mortality by region of origin is only available for the route

⁷ ARL, 1883; p. 2.

⁸ ARL, 1878/79, Resolution, p. 3.

from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra valley in 1877/78, and then only for two groups: (a) the so-called 'jungles' of Chotanagpur, and (b) all others.⁹ Information on the average period of detention in the depots at Calcutta is only available for 1875/76 and from 1877/78 to 1881 (see Table 2), and no systematic evidence is available on the average period of detention in the depots at Goalundo and Dhubri; and systematic information on voyage length is only available on voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra valley between 1874/75 and 1923/24 (see Tables 3 and 4), and from Goalundo to the districts of Sylhet and Cachar in 1878/79, 1884, 1885, and between 1887 and 1905/6 (see Table 6).¹⁰

A final deficiency is that information is not available on all the ascribed causes of death of recruits en route to the tea gardens. Deaths from cholera were usually noted, but, with minor exceptions, the various government reports were silent on the other causes of death.

Table 7
*Mortality by Age Class of Emigrants Despatched from
Goalundo to the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys, 1881-1910/11*

	1881-89	1890-99	1900-1910/11
Number Arrived at Goalundo:			
Adults	35,463	156,254	179,631
Children	6,671	49,991	46,396
Infants	2,281	14,563	15,774
Deaths:*			
Adults	400	672	248
Children	96	245	120
Infants	73	90	53
Loss Rates (%):			
Adults	1.13	0.43	0.14
Children	1.44	0.49	0.26
Infants	3.20	0.62	0.34
Loss Rates (Adults = 100):			
Children	127	114	186
Infants	283	144	243

* Deaths in Goalundo depots and on voyages.

Note: Children defined as from 2 to 15 years; infants as under 2 years.

Source: Annual Reports on Inland Emigration to the Districts of Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

⁹ ARIE, 1877/78, p. 16.

¹⁰ Due to the incompleteness of data on the average period the time recruits were at risk, 'loss rates' (that is, deaths divided by the number of recruits who were accommodated in depots, or who embarked) rather than death rates per month or per year, are reported in the tables of this paper.

Findings

Keeping these limitations in mind, the following findings emerge from the quantitative evidence presented in Tables 1–7:

First, the majority of deaths in depots and on voyages were ascribed to cholera (see Tables 2, 3, 5, 6; WP Tables 6, 8, 9). Cholera was hyper-endemic in Bengal, but much less prevalent in the main labour catchment area for the tea gardens; the North Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar and Chotanagpur.¹¹ The population of this labour reserve had had less exposure to cholera than the Bengalis, and so had built up less immunity. Recruits proceeding through Bengal to the tea gardens were thus placed at great risk.

Whereas cholera was mildly endemic in the plains of the North Western Provinces, Oudh, and Bihar, it was epidemic in Chotanagpur. Recruits from Chotanagpur, the so-called Junglees or Dhangurs, were, accordingly, particularly at risk while en route to the tea gardens, and their vulnerability was recognized by contemporaries.¹² Separate statistical evidence on the loss rates of Chotanagpur recruits as compared to other recruits was only reported for the voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra valley in 1877/78; the loss rate suffered by recruits from Chotanagpur was 3.97 per cent as compared to 1.10 per cent for all other recruits.¹³

Although cholera was always present at a relatively high level in Bengal, it assumed epidemic proportions in some years. Statistics on the annual number of cholera deaths in Calcutta between 1865 and 1920, for example, show that the annual average exceeded 4,000 in 1865–69, and it exceeded 2,000 in 1882–84, 1889–92, 1895–97, 1900–9, 1912, and 1919–20.¹⁴ In some of these years, there were also cholera outbreaks in the Calcutta depots (notably in 1864/65–1867–68; see Table 2), and on voyages departing from Kushtia or Goalundo (notably in 1864/65–1868–69, 1882, 1884, and 1896; see Tables 3, 6; WP Tables 8, 9), suggesting that the outbreaks in depots and on voyages were often linked to a more general outbreak in Calcutta.¹⁵

The second finding is that the loss rate in depots and on voyages declined over time (see Tables 2–6; WP Tables 6, 8, 9). This was not due to a change in the composition of the migrant population; in particular, there was no

¹¹ Leonard Rogers, 'The Incidence and Spread of Cholera in India: Forecasting and Control of Epidemics,' *Indian Medical Memoirs*, No. 9, Calcutta, 1923, pp. 21–23; R. Pollitzer, *Cholera*, Geneva, 1959, pp. 53, 87.

¹² Report of the Commissioners... Tea Cultivation, p. 33; ARIE, 1875/76, p. 6; 1877/78, pp. 14, 16; ARL, 1879, p. 8.

¹³ ARIE, 1877/78, p. 16.

¹⁴ Pollitzer, *Cholera*, p. 94.

¹⁵ The link between outbreaks of cholera in Calcutta and depot deaths was also present in the case of the Calcutta depots which housed emigrants embarking for overseas colonial destinations; see Ralph Shlomowitz and John McDonald, 'Mortality of Indian Labour on Ocean Voyages,' *Studies in History*, n.s., Vol. 6 (1990).

decline in the proportions of those who were most at risk of death: children and infants (see Tables 1 and 7), and recruits from Chotanagpur.¹⁶ Rather the decline in mortality was due to (1) the decline in the average period in which recruits were at risk of death, as the average length of detention in depots and the average voyage length declined over time (see Tables 2-4, and 6), and (2) the introduction of sanitary improvements, particularly the provision of clean water.¹⁷

The relative weight to be placed on each of these two factors can be gauged by considering the crude death rate per 1,000 over a constant period of time, say a "30-day" month. On voyages from Goalundo to the Brahmaputra valley, for example, the crude death rate per month declined from 43 per 1,000 in the period from 1874-75 to 1879-80 to 8 per 1,000 in the period from 1880-81 to 1885 (see Table 3), before the switch from commercial steamers to daily mail steamers. This indicates that more weight should be given to improvements in sanitation than to the fall in the average length of voyage in explaining the fall in the loss rate. A further reason why death rates were lower in the 1880s is that compared with the 1870s (and the 1890s) this decade was relatively free of famine. We will return to the influence of famine below.

The importance of effecting a hygienic regime in depots and on the voyage was highlighted in 1866 by Lees.¹⁸ He compared the mortality suffered by recruits en route to the tea gardens with the mortality suffered by Indian troops: 'The mortality amongst the troops going to Assam last year on the same river, and in the same or similar steamers, was, amongst the natives no more than it would have been on land, yet amongst the coolies we have the enormous average of 3 per cent....'¹⁹ The explanation, he suggested (quoting from a report of an inspector of hospitals), was 'that troops being under discipline, greater attention is given to sanitary arrangement, cleanliness and ventilation'.²⁰

The third, and final, finding is that during the 1860s and 1870s the mortality suffered by the so-called "colonial emigrants" in Calcutta depots and on overseas voyages was considerably lower than that suffered by the "inland emigrants" en route to the tea gardens, and this conclusion was known to contemporaries.²¹ They attributed it to (1) the more careful

¹⁶ Shlomowitz and Brennan, 'Mortality and migrant labour in Assam, 1865-1921,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27(1), 1990.

¹⁷ Pollitzer, *Cholera*, p. 880; Shlomowitz and McDonald, 'Mortality of Indian Labour on Ocean Voyages.'

¹⁸ Lees, *A Memorandum*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²¹ Shlomowitz and McDonald, 'Mortality of Indian Labour on Ocean Voyages'; Annual Sanitary Report of the Province of Assam, 1878, p. 11.

selection of recruits for overseas colonies; and (2) the lower proportion of recruits from Chotanagpur for overseas colonies.²²

The difference in death rates of colonial and inland emigrants can be shown for the second half of the 1870s. Whereas the crude death rate per month of colonial emigrants in Calcutta depots and on overseas voyages was consistently below 10 per 1,000, the crude death rate per month of inland emigrants in Calcutta depots and on voyages to Assam was almost invariably over 20 per 1,000.

Discussion

The improvement in the water supply on the steamers to the tea gardens was the result of investigations by A.C.C. De Renzy, the Deputy Civil Surgeon and Sanitary Commissioner for Assam. During 1877 and 1878 he investigated the inland labour migration system, and why it was many times more dangerous than labour migration to the colonies. Having dismissed the current theory that it was due to overfeeding (!), he pointed out that while the Europeans and crews on the steamers used water drawn from the river, precipitated with alum and then filtered, the migrants used two tubs alongside the latrines, from which they used water to wash themselves, and then rinsed their mouths out with the same water. The government of Assam approached the government of Bengal which brought pressure on the steamer companies to ensure that there was no possibility of one person using water previously used by another. But De Renzy also claimed that cholera was brought from the depots, and that this was where it should be attacked.²³ The depots were no longer the cess pits they had been in the 1860s, but the collection and processing of recruits continued to produce severe health risks.²⁴

As the demand for labour increased, new recruiting areas developed. This meant that many of the lessons learnt earlier about the control of sanitation during recruitment had to be learned again in different provinces. In 1896 the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Henry Cotton, became so concerned with the high level of mortality during the journey to Assam, that he instructed Surgeon-Major Neil Campbell to investigate the process of migration. Among the recruitment areas that Campbell examined was Bilaspur, the recruiting centre for the Central Provinces, which at that time was experiencing a massive famine. Campbell found that no provision had been made for the accommodation of recruits, and that 700 to 800 people were camped for three to four days on the bank of a small river which had become polluted. He also found that while some of the depots in Bengal

²² Report of the Commissioners ... Tea Cultivation, p. 34; ARIE, 1911–12, p. 5.

²³ Annual Sanitary Report of the Province of Assam, 1878, pp. 11–13.

²⁴ Report of the Commissioners ... Tea Cultivation, pp. 27–29.

were well organised, others, including one at Goalundo, were over-crowded and unhygienic. There were no latrines in third class railway carriages, and the steamers were over-crowded. Moreover, at one transshipment point, labourers with cholera were placed on board the steamers because there was no accommodation at the depot. This investigation demonstrated that despite thirty years of government concern with the conditions of migration, the interests of the labourers continued to be ignored as changes occurred in the patterns of recruitment and transportation.²⁵

For the cultivators and agricultural labourers who comprised the bulk of the recruits, famine was a major reason for their decision to go to the plantations. Between 1863–64 and 1900, about 56 per cent of the recruits who travelled from Kushtia or Goalundo to the tea districts in the Brahmaputra valley, did so during the twelve famine years 1865–66/1866–67, 1873–74/1874–75, 1877–78/1878–79, 1891/1892, 1896/97, 1899/1900 (Table 3)²⁶. And an even greater proportion of the mortality among labourers making their way to Assam occurred during the famine years. For example, about 69 per cent of the mortality among the labourers and their families who journeyed from Kushtia or Goalundo to the Brahmaputra valley between 1863–64 and 1900 was during the twelve years of famine (Table 3). More generally, the importance of famine is reflected in increased mortality rates as well as recruitment totals in Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

There were a number of factors at work in the increased mortality in the famine years. First, because of the food crises which had prompted their migration, some of the labourers were below the usual physical standards required by the plantations: but they were still accepted. In 1874 the Superintendent of Emigration in Bengal remarked that the standard had been reduced, 'to afford every facility to the distressed population of the famine stricken districts to proceed to the labour districts.'²⁷ The migrants were therefore more susceptible to the diseases—especially cholera—endemic in Bengal.

During the 1860s and 1870s, periods of famine were accompanied by an increase in the proportion of children and infants involved in the migration (see Table 1). This signals an increase in the number of families migrating

²⁵ Resolution on Surgeon-Major Campbell's Report on the Arrangements for the transit of Emigrants to Assam, by Sir William Cotton, 15 April 1897, Indian National Library.

²⁶ Mohapatra demonstrates conclusively the positive correlation between rising rice prices and the scale of recruitment from Chotanagpur; see his 'Coolies and Colliers: A Study of the Agrarian Context of Labour Migration from Chotanagpur, 1880–1920,' *Studies in History*, n.s., Vol. 1 (1985), p. 269.

²⁷ 'Annual Report on Recruitment and Transport of Labour to Assam,' Government of Bengal, Resolution on Emigration, Calcutta, 16 November 1874, P/694, I.O.R. For a later example, see J.D. Gregorson, 'Methods Employed in Combating Disease amongst Coolies in Assam,' *The Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 12(3), 1 February 1909, p. 32.

during periods of distress. The presence in the depots and on the boats of increased proportions of children and infants, with their higher vulnerability to gastro-intestinal infections, must have raised the mortality rates during these times. By the 1890s the proportion of children and infants was at a substantially higher level during normal years than it had been in the 1860s and 1870s, but there were no further increases in mortality rates during the 1896–97, 1900–1, 1907–8 famines.

Conclusion

We find that there was considerable mortality associated with the movement of labour to the tea gardens in the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys, that this was brought about largely by cholera, and occurred mainly during periods of famine migration. If we look at the reasons for the decline in the mortality we can see that this owed nothing to advances in medical therapeutics. The crucial elements were technological advances in transportation: from country boats, to commercial steamers, to fast mail steamers, to railways, and government driven improvements in medical checks, and improvements in sanitation and clean water.

There are also other comments we can make about the labour migration aspect of the major capitalist agricultural industry in India. Despite the fact that the mortality associated with the migration of workers to the tea plantations declined over time, the conditions that brought about the mortality remained in place—if moderated. The main cause of the mortality remained cholera and although the deaths from cholera can be explained by the relative lack of resistance of recruits to cholera, they also point to a failure to implement in new recruiting regions and transit depots the sanitary and clean water measures which by the turn of the century had been in place for many years. That internal migrants were more at risk than colonial migrants indicates that the higher selection standards for “colonial” labour were effective in reducing mortality, but there may also have been greater control over the “colonial” process, with more concern shown by Indian authorities about the death rates on voyages to the colonies, than over those to the tea gardens. This question awaits further study.

When we turn to the labour migration to the tea gardens in the context of other streams of labour migration in the nineteenth century, it is clear that our results bear out findings obtained in other studies. Children and infants were, as elsewhere, more at risk than adults; and all categories of migrants were more at risk than the general population. There was also a corresponding improvement in mortality rates over the last half of the nineteenth century. What does the study add to the more important debates? Were the diseases which people brought on board with them the causes of the high mortality—or those they contracted? There is not really enough

information to be certain about this, but if we assume that the information we have about the higher mortality from cholera of people from Chotanagpur is generally correct, it seems that they were at more risk than were labourers from the North Western Provinces, and that this was largely because they possessed less immunity to the endemic cholera of Bengal. This suggests that people tended to die from diseases they contracted during the journey, but that the immunities which they brought with them were equally important in determining their degree of risk.

This leads on to the more important question: did the people involved in the industry do sufficient to improve the situation? There was little they could do about the endemicity of cholera in Bengal. But they could improve sanitation conditions and water supplied to the workers. Lees pointed out the need to improve the conditions of the depots as early as 1866; De Renzy demonstrated in 1878 how to avoid the spread of cholera and dysentery on the steamers. To a certain extent these reforms were carried out. But deaths still occurred at substantial rates. Why? One thing stands out clearly from the statistics: that in times of famine people were much more at risk. Because a high proportion of the deaths occurred during periods when many of the migrants were in a weak physical condition, it seems likely that the improvements in sanitation and water supply were unable to prevent the spread of cholera among the larger numbers of people attracted to the tea gardens during food crises. That is, when large numbers of weakened people, who had little immunity against cholera, were brought together in the migration process, the sanitary and water arrangements, which were usually successful, broke down. They were to do so again, though not as drastically, during the Bengal Famine of 1943. Moreover, the famines of the 1890s brought into the recruitment process, regions, like the Central Provinces, which had previously been too prosperous to provide labour for tea gardens, or were outside the range of the railway system. This suggests, therefore, that the mortality of migrants should be understood in terms of the interrelationships among three main factors: the general economic circumstances of the migrant population; the mixing in depots and modes of transport of people from different disease environments; and the levels of sanitary concern at transshipment depots, and during the voyage.

Fear and loathing in Bhadohi: The revolt of the Monas Rajputs, 1857–58

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Introduction

Although over 130 years have passed since its cessation, the Indian Revolt of 1857–59, or the Indian ‘Mutiny’ as it is still more commonly known, continues to fascinate and perplex scholars. The outbreaks of sepoy mutiny at various cantonments and the accompanying urban and rural uprisings which occurred throughout much of northern and parts of central India, whether viewed regionally or locally, represent a complex and varied phenomenon. The Revolt is considered by historians to be in broad terms a conservative and restorative uprising, a reaction to actual or perceived changes brought about by British rule. But at present a satisfactory answer to the fundamental question continues to remain elusive: just what was the precise nature of the upheaval that broke out in the summer months of 1857 which provided the last great armed challenge to British rule in the nineteenth century?

While a vast literature on the Revolt has built up, full and comprehensive historical understanding of the event remains somewhat limited. Present knowledge tends to be lopsided. We know a great deal about the British reaction, for instance the attitude and actions of the more senior military officers and civilian officials. However our knowledge of rural revolt, particularly peasant involvement in rebellion, is sketchy. Recent research has attempted to fill in this gap.

Since the pioneering work of S.B. Chaudhuri contained in his book *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies (1857–59)* published in 1957, which sought to examine briefly and systematically, in a district by district fashion, all the outbreaks of civil revolt, scholarly study on the Revolt has increasingly

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tended to concentrate on circumstances at the regional or district level. A leading exponent in this field has been the late Eric Stokes. In a series of articles and in a posthumously published and largely unfinished monograph, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, edited in a masterly fashion by C.A. Bayly, Stokes investigates in detail the local response of magnates and peasant communities to the sudden collapse of British rule in selected districts in western Uttar Pradesh. This approach continues to remain the predominant one.¹

This paper follows this profitable line of approach by seeking to examine the uprising of a specific Rajput clan within a district situated in eastern Uttar Pradesh, but what formed in 1857 part of the British administered division of Benares. The Rajput revolt, and indeed rural revolt in this region more generally, has not yet been studied in any great degree of depth. Yet it is only through a close and detailed study of such uprisings that a more complete historical picture of the Revolt can emerge. As a case study of the Rajput clan revolt, this paper highlights the importance of material loss as well as other less tangible but no less important factors, such as the level of social status held by an individual or a family within a village and the level of prestige in which a clan as a collective group is held within its own area of settlement and beyond. It appears that some of the more cohesive and unified clans, faced prior to 1857 with a gradual slide in their social, economic and political position, seized the opportunity provided by the outbreak of sepoy mutiny to reverse this process and to reassert their local dominance. This action in response to actual or perceived deprivation tended to be overtly political in character, with the proclamation of the revival of local Rajput rule. The means by which this was carried out reveals, following the path of more recent research on the Revolt, the importance to peasant insurgency of communal consciousness and ideology that encompassed strongly held beliefs and grievances. Size and geographical spread also played an important role. This feature ensured that any such uprising would be both widely supported and prolonged.

The pargana of Bhadohi is located in the upper north-western portion of the district of Mirzapur. This large pargana, separated from the rest of the district by the Ganga, shares its western border with the district of Allahabad, its northern border with Jaunpur and its eastern border with the district of Benares. Situated on the fertile alluvial Gangetic plain, the pargana

¹ Sashi Bhusan Chaudhuri, *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies (1857-1859)*, Calcutta, 1957; Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raja: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India*, Cambridge, 1978; and *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, ed., C.A. Bayly, Oxford, 1986. For an example of a recent publication on the Revolt that follows this approach see Rudrangshu Mukerjee's careful and comprehensive examination of popular rebellion in the Kingdom of Awadh in his book, *Awadh in Revolt, 1857-58: A Study of Popular Resistance*, Delhi, 1984.

was, by 1857, extensively cultivated and supported a dense agricultural population.² Although Bhadohi possessed a large number of Rajput clans, most notably the Bisen, Bais and the Gaharwar, by far the largest clan was that of the Monas Rajputs. According to the 1881-census, the clan's population was said to be some 8,000.³ This clan also had settlements of substantial size in eastern Allahabad. In 1857 their uprising was, according to Eric Stokes, 'among the most spectacular'⁴ in the region.

The Outbreak of Revolt

Briefly the revolt consisted of Udwant Singh, one of the leading members of the clan, who assumed in early June 1857, the title of Raja of Bhadohi and appointed Bhola Singh and Ram Baksh Singh, both of whom were close relatives, as his *diwans* (ministers). Udwant Singh then proceeded to gather a force comprising of between one and two thousand kinsmen. With this substantial armed following he was able to close the portion of the Grand Trunk Road running through northern Bhadohi and cut the telegraphic wires and hence British communications westward with the city of Allahabad and beyond. The proclaimed Raja collected 'benevolences' from the surrounding villages and 'anarchy became universal' as the Rajputs attacked those with whom they held past grudges, in particular those who had supported the Raja of Benares.⁵ Significantly the first reported violent incident was the attack and wounding, on 9 June 1857, of a *sazwal* (revenue agent) of the Raja of Benares by the inhabitants of the village of Bhinda (Bhunda?).⁶

Udwant Singh and his *diwans* were seized in mid-June seemingly by some dubious ploy on the part of Munshi Durshan Lal, the principal agent of the Raja of Benares in the pargana, and promptly handed over to the British. They were with equal swiftness tried and executed under the wide

² In 1881 Bhadohi comprised an area of 391.6 square miles and contained a population of 283,027. A.T. Atkinson, ed., *Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North Western Provinces*, Vol. XIV, Allahabad, 1883, p. 59.

³ *Census of India, 1881: The North Western Provinces and Oudh Supplement*, Table 5: 'Castes and Sub-divisions of Castes Suspected of Practising Female Infanticide Classed by Sexes as above and below 10 Years of Age', p. 59.

⁴ Eric Stokes, 'Agrarian Relations: Northern and Central India', in Dharma Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. 2: c1757-1970, Cambridge, 1983, p. 56.

⁵ 'Narrative of Events Attending the Outbreak of Disturbance and the Restoration of Authority in the Division of Benares in 1857-58', R. Taylor, Officiating Joint Magistrate, Jounpore, 19 November 1858, in Sir John Kaye's *Mutiny Papers*, I.O.R., Home Miscellaneous Series 727, microfilm reel no. 303, fol. 833.

⁶ P. Walker, Deputy Collector, *Diary of Events for the Mirzapur District*, Mirzapur Collectorate Mutiny Records, in S.A.A. Rizvi and M.I. Bhargava, eds., *Freedom: Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, Vol. IV, Lucknow, 1959, (hereafter FSUP) p. 53. 'Trial Proceedings in the Case, Govt. vs Jhuri Singh and others', Mirzapur Collectorate Mutiny Basta, *ibid.*, p. 79.

ranging powers of martial law which had been promulgated by that stage. If by this act the Raja of Benares or the British thought that the Monas revolt would cease they were mistaken. While the forces raised by Udwant Singh appeared to have dispersed, the pressure of social sanction began to be exerted by the widows of those executed who refused to eat or drink until the deaths of their husbands had been avenged. This was combined with a monetary incentive in the form of a reward of Rs. 300 offered by the widow of Udwant Singh for the head of W.R. Moore, the British Superintendent of the Raja of Benares' Family Domains which included Bhadohi. Moore had overseen the executions and his official position and energetic attempts to suppress the rebellion made him, in the Rajputs eyes, at the very least, a firm ally and supporter of the Raja of Benares.⁷

Jhuri Singh, motivated by a desire for revenge, assumed leadership over those in revolt. On 4 July, he, with an estimated two to three hundred followers, attacked and killed Moore at the village of Pali, together with the two European indigo planters present with him who were owners of the nearby indigo factory. Moore's head was decapitated by Jhuri Singh and duly presented to Udwant Singh's widow, Mussammat Mabussiah.⁸ From July onward he and his followers engaged in what has been termed a 'protracted guerilla war'⁹ against the levies of the Raja of Benares and the British troops. His force continued to pester the British by becoming a 'mosquito militia': too small to warrant a large scale and prolonged army campaign but too large to be defeated by the local district officials.¹⁰ Jhuri Singh's force never appears to have amounted to more than one thousand, but it continued to hover around Mirzapur's border regions with Allahabad and Jaunpur until, at least, mid-1858. However, his following began to diminish gradually in size from late 1857, as the rebellion generally began to wane. Jhuri Singh increasingly found it difficult to find adequate food supplies for his followers after the British had ascertained and destroyed the main villages which had supplied his followers with provisions.¹¹ Furthermore,

⁷ Trial Proceedings, *ibid.*

⁸ Taylor, 'Narrative of Events', fol. 834. According to Zoe Yallard the murder of Moore, Edmond Jones and Clinton Kemp has passed into the folklore of the district. Each year at the boat mela held at the district's capital a ballad is sung recounting the events which occurred at Pali. See Zoe Yallard, *Traders and Nabobs: The British in Cawnpore, 1765-1857*, Slough, 1987, fn. 3, p. 323.

⁹ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Delhi, 1983, pp. 320-21.

¹⁰ Richard G. Fox, *Kin, Clan, Raja, and Rulers: State-Hinterland Relations in Preindustrial India*, Berkeley, 1971, p. 123.

¹¹ *House of Commons Sessional Papers* (hereafter cited *PP*, op. cit.) XLIV, The Commissioner of Benares to the Secretary to Government, Central Provinces, Benares, 26 September 1857, p. 298. Although the Monas revolt remained essentially a localised affair, it may well have caused a degree of panic in the city of Benares. A British military officer speculated that the desertion of the telegraphic office in the city may have been due to rumours that the Monas

although he continued to selectively target symbols of wealth and authority which represented the new order, that is, economic or political structures that had been established under the administration of the Raja or the British Raj, his forays outside Bhadohi were less successful and are indicative of the localism of such a revolt. An attack on the house of a rich zamindar in the market town of Julapar in Allahabad failed, with Jhuri Singh reportedly wounded in the assault.¹² An attempt in May 1858 to plunder the town of Machhlisahr in southern Jaunpur similarly proved to be abortive with a force raised by the zamindars of the town driving off Jhuri Singh and his followers.¹³

Although Jhuri Singh's force was acknowledged by the local district officials to have given 'considerable trouble', it was believed by this stage that 'the disturbances had passed from a political to a predatory character'.¹⁴ As in the case of the majority of rebel leaders in the Revolt, Jhuri Singh ultimately came to be regarded by the British as a criminal and a *dacoit* in much the same way as those villages most active in revolt within Bhadohi tended to be labelled '*budmush* villages'.¹⁵ Within the pargana itself the Rajput rebellion was to be crushed decisively by the combination of the sizeable armed force raised by Munshi Darshan Lal, and a series of punitive military expeditions sent into the area by the British. By December 1857, the Monas revolt within the pargana was for all intents and purposes over. But it was only in 1863, long after the rebellion had been extinguished throughout northern India, that Jhuri Singh was finally captured despite the offer of a large reward. This was not unusual. In Ghazipur leading rebels in the rural regions continued to be harboured and protected by villagers until the late 1860s.¹⁶ Upon capture, Jhuri Singh was subsequently tried and executed.

The British Response

The British reaction to the outbreak of the revolt was rapid. Sowars of the 50th Irregular Cavalry were sent to the pargana in mid-June 1857 with the express purpose of reopening communications along the strategically important Grand Trunk Road. Thus the uprising posed a direct threat to this vital communication and supply route rather than posing any real danger

Rajputs were gathering to attack the city after the murder of Moore. This perhaps was linked more to the attempted march on Benares by the Raghubansi Rajputs of Jaunpur only a few days earlier. *PP*, 1857-58 XLIV, Lt. P. Stewart, 6 July 1857 (telegraphic), p. 14.

¹² *PP*, 1857-58 XLIN, Narrative of Events 7-14 November 1857, p. 281.

¹³ 'Supplement to the Narrative of Events in the Benares Division', R. Taylor, Offg. Joint Mag., Jounpore, 19 November 1858, in Sir John Kaye's *Mutiny Papers*, op. cit., fol. 844.

¹⁴ Atkinson, p. 142

¹⁵ *PP*, 1857-58 XLIV, The Assistant Magistrate of Mirzapore to the Commissioner of Benares, Gopeegunge, 1 November 1857, p. 263.

¹⁶ Wilton Oldham, *Tenant-Right and Auction Sales in Ghazee poor and the Province of Benares*, Dublin, 1873, p. 7.

to the district's capital or any other important administrative centre. It was during this military operation that the three leading Monas rebel leaders were brought to the town of Gopiganj and 'tried by court martial and hanged the same evening'.¹⁷ The village of Dubari, home of Bhola Singh, was subsequently burnt by the British. However, this village and others in the path of the British forces were found to be deserted with visible signs that the inhabitants had managed to carry off to safety most of their possessions. One British force alone burnt at least three other villages.¹⁸

The British believed that these military expeditions had been a complete success and pointed to the fact that villagers were now beginning to return *dak* horses and government bullocks carried off at the beginning of the disturbances. One military officer commented that 'the punishment inflicted on the zamindars at Gopaegunj and the burning of various villages along the road, has apparently had already a most beneficial effect'.¹⁹ A civilian resident of Benares, the Reverend James Kennedy, shared a similar view but went further by suggesting the acts of suppression in Mirzapur had contributed to the subsidence of revolt in the district of Benares: 'Whatever may be thought of such doings, one thing is certain, that these executions have struck terror into the hearts of the marauders in this district, and have done much to awe them into better conduct.'²⁰

The view propounded was that desperate measures were required, however harsh, for desperate times. Certainly Moore, according to the anonymous account of a military officer, 'had been particularly active in burning what he considered to be disaffected villages'. The writer goes on to assert that his actions were perhaps too extreme and over and above the severe actions that were officially sanctioned at the time: '... he had been warned, that if he persisted in such extreme measures against the natives, they would at last turn in self-defence'.²¹

With the death of the Joint Magistrate the scale of British retribution expanded greatly in scale. Upon receiving the news of the murder of Moore

¹⁷ PP, XXX Session 2, Captain Fraser to Colonel Gordon, Commanding at Benares, Sydabad, 17 June 1857, p. 583.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 583-84.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 584.

²⁰ Quoted by Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. 1, reprint, New Delhi, 1981, p. 241. In the same letter Kennedy has an interesting passage on the uprising: 'The other day, a party was sent out to Gopiganj, some thirty miles distant to seize a landholder who had proclaimed himself Rajah, and two men said to be his ministers. They were tried on the spot by a commission composed of five military officers and civil officers. After a short trial, the three were condemned to be executed then and there. The Rajah and the others protested they were innocent, and appealed to the suddar (the supreme court). They were told there was no appeal these days. To their utter amazement and horror, preparations were made for their execution before their own door; and before the sun went down they were executed.' Ibid., pp. 240-41.

²¹ *The Star*, 3 September 1857, quoted by R. Montgomery Martin, *The Indian Empire*, reprint, Vol. 2, Delhi, 1983, p. 411.

at Pali, a force was immediately sent there, arriving later that day. Further supplemented by a force under the Magistrate, St. George Tucker, an attempt was made to seize Jhuri Singh and others believed to be responsible. The combined force 'scoured the country'²² but without success. As in the initial acts of suppression undertaken by the British at Benares, it was the actions of the European civilians which tended to be, in general, more extreme. One officer who formed part of the punitive force had strong reservations about the conduct of the indigo planter who accompanied the force as the acting magistrate:

When villagers were brought in as prisoners, in order that they might be questioned, he would commence conversation by walking up to them as they squatted on the ground, and kicking their naked bodies with his heavy riding-boots. At another time he would, with his fist, strike the unresisting wretches in the face; and these gentle persuasives failing, he would have them tied up to a tree, and whipped with a stick or piece of rope, until they would give the information he required. This appeared to me very like the old mode of putting people to torture to extract evidence.²³

Later in 1857, further punitive expeditions were sent into Bhadohi, with the object of seizing or killing the rebels. One such expedition, in late October 1857, sought to capture Jhuri Singh or failing that to destroy the villages believed to be offering him assistance. This force consisted of 60 Sikh soldiers, 150 police levies and 20 *sowars* under the command of C.A. Elliot, an assistant magistrate. The only regret that Elliot felt throughout the course of this operation was that at the village of Sherpur he had been unable to carry off all the sizable quantity of grain found there. For this village and others, regardless of whether all the inhabitants were engaged in rebellion, Elliot had no hesitation in issuing orders that they be 'destroyed, looted and burnt'.²⁴ Both the village of Sherpur and the village of Bhunda were believed by officials to be of a 'notoriously bad character' and 'hornet's nests' of armed revolt. At Bhunda, two Monas Rajputs were seized.²⁵ One was discovered to be the father of Zabar Singh, an individual implicated in the killings at Pali, the other presumably was not. Both were summarily hung. The British officials justified these and other harsh and indiscriminate acts by reference to the scale of the Rajput revolt they were faced with, and out of a belief that these punitive measures would ultimately

²² PP, 1857 XXX, Lt.-Colonel Pott to Officer Commanding at Benares, n.d., 1857, p. 625.

²³ *The Star*, 23 September 1857, quoted by Martin, op. cit., p. 302.

²⁴ Asst. Mag. of Mirzapur to the Commr., op. cit., p. 263.

²⁵ PP, 1857-58 XLIV, The Commissioner of Benares to the Secretary to Government, CP, Benares, 7 November 1857, p. 252.

compel the peasantry to return to peaceful cultivation. Elliot expressed this view clearly in his report to the Commissioner of the Benares Division:

I have a horror of unnecessary cruelty; or confounding the innocent with the guilty; but these villages are notoriously bad. They fired on us directly we came in sight. They have supported the murderers of Mr. Moore, and made their cause their own, and, as an example, a severe punishment was necessary. From the peculiarly rich character of the soil, and the very thorough cultivation, I have every reason to hope that the effect of this will be, that the inhabitants will return to their villages, and see the folly of siding against the Government, and the unprofitableness of rebellion.²⁶

A Brief History of the Monas

The Monas Rajputs had first emerged as powerful local landholders in the sixteenth century but appear to have settled in the pargana shortly after commencement of the Muslim invasions into northern India. According to the clan's oral tradition their ancestor is said to be one Monas Rishi of Amber in Rajasthan. A group of Rajputs from the clan, on pilgrimage, to Benares passed through the area which they subsequently seized by force from the aboriginal Bhars sometime in the twelfth or thirteenth century. William Crooke, among others, has noted that available evidence suggests that they were comparatively recent migrants to the region.²⁷ Their dominance over the pargana had been confirmed when they were officially accorded zamindari status by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. However, it was to be in the period of Madun Singh and his three sons, Zohrawar Singh, Archal Singh and Guj Singh that the power of the Monas Rajputs apparently reached its zenith. This period spanning the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century represented the good old days, 'the by-gone days which the people never tire of praising'.²⁸ It was around this period that Peter Mundy, a seventeenth century European traveller in India, passed through Bhadohi. After being repeatedly subject to *jagatt*, a levy exacted from travellers by the Monas Rajputs, Mundy remarked to one such group that he had been given free and unmolested passage through the region by Shah Jahan. In reply he was told that '... the Countrie was theirs, and that the Kinge was their Subjecte', from which Mundy drew

²⁶ Asst. Mag. of Mirzapur to the Commr., op. cit., p. 264.

²⁷ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of North Western India*, Vol. IV, reprint, Delhi, 1975, p. 1.

²⁸ 'Report Upon the Position of the Munzooreedars of Pergunnah Bhudohee in the Family Domains of the Maharaja of Benares', by W. Duthoit, Superintendent of the Family Domains, Mirzapur, 1869, p. 3.

the obvious inference that they '... neither regard the King nor his laws varie much'.²⁹ During this period the Monas Rajputs were considered by outsiders to be 'rebels' and the pargana had, Mundy reported, a 'notorious reputation'.³⁰ When the Rajputs engaged in similar activities during 1857 they were once again regarded as rebels. Instead the exaction of a levy or tribute can be seen as one facet of their independence and autonomy over their ancestral lands ruled over, during this time, by one of their kinsmen as Raja.

The pargana later became divided amongst the descendants of the three sons of Madun Singh. After a period of time in which contests and struggles for the ultimate political control over the clan had resulted in the accumulation of revenue arrears, the Raja of Benares, Bulwant Singh, in 1751 paid the balance outstanding and in return obtained zamindari control of the pargana. It was from this date that the position of the Monas clan in Bhadohi began to be gradually eroded. Bulwant Singh, however, tended not to intervene in the internal affairs of Bhadohi other than to grant revenue-free land to Brahmins or his supporters. In 1781 Raja Mahip Narain Singh, the successor of Bulwant Singh, obtained a *sanad* from the British, upholding his rights of control over the pargana. Two years later this was confirmed as a *jagir* over Bhadohi and other lands held by the Raja as part of his private estate or 'Family Domains' as they were called. Because of the Raja's support of the British and his substantial influence within the Benares Province more generally, his private lands were exempted from the Permanent Settlement of 1795. Nor was the British judicial system allowed to extend to such land in regard to land revenue matters. For these lands the Raja paid a fixed lump sum of Rs. 1,75,659 as tribute. At this time Raja Mahip Narain Singh refused to recognise the existence of hereditary sub-proprietors, that is, the immediate zamindars who occupied a position between the Raja and the cultivating peasantry. But the position of the Monas zamindars remained, by and large, unaffected and the pargana itself remained lightly assessed.

Under the next Raja of Benares, Udit Narain Singh, the principle of sole proprietorship or sole right of zamindari residing exclusively in the Raja was pursued with vigour. The Raja blatantly aimed to dispossess village zamindars by progressively larger revenue settlements resulting in revenue arrears and subsequent purchase of landholdings by the Raja at auctions. In conjunction with this policy the Raja sought to break the unity of the village proprietors by subletting land in a *mehal* or even within a village to individuals of different castes/or religion to the local residents. After the substantially increased land revenue level that had been finalised in the

²⁹ Richard Carnac Temple, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy, In Europe and Asia 1608-1667*, Vol. II: Travels in Asia 1628-1634, Second Series No. XXXV, London, 1914, pp. 119-20.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 117-18.

revenue settlement of 1824, supposedly for a 12 year period, attempts were made by the Raja's officials to immediately revise the figure set. This land revenue settlement sparked widespread disturbances in the pargana and aroused the first serious British concern about the nature of the Raja of Benares' rule over Bhadohi.³¹

It appears that the upheaval and discontent in Bhadohi had been present from at least the beginning of British rule in the region. The Magistrate of Mirzapur in a report written in 1814 on the nature and level of crime in the district devoted a considerable portion of the report to the conditions in Bhadohi with its exceptionally high levels of murder, burglary, thefts and land disputes. The Magistrate was well aware that most of the turmoil evident in Bhadohi stemmed from the Raja's administration. He observed that the general content of the returns sent to him of serious criminal incidents by the Raja of Benares' police officials typically were along the lines that 'the poor, or those acting against the interests of the Rajah are secured; the rich, or those connected with him, have escaped to Oudh'.³²

During the tour of the Governor-General Lord Amherst through the Upper Provinces in 1826, he was followed from Dinapur to Kanpur by a large group of dispossessed Monas and Brahmin zamindars from Bhadohi. Their pleas for redress resulted in an official investigation and the production of a report. The report, written by W.W. Bird, noted pointedly that the Raja had sought to assume exclusive right of proprietorship over the rights of the existing village zamindars:

... the acts which were oppressive to the people, and against which they had no protection, were those which yielded profit to the Rajah and his agents, and might be done under the apparent sanction of the Law. Thus a man might be deprived of his Estate, and the act might be called resumption of unassessed land, or land to which the Rajah laid claim; he might be stripped of his money or his Goods under pretence of distress for an alleged arrear of Revenue; in the same way any extortionate demand might be called a new settlement. Such was called the Revenue management of the Pergunnah, and if the legality of any part of the process was to be contested, the only tribunal allowed to the complainant was that the Rajah, who was himself the party accused, or the Collector, who appears to have been his supporter, with an appeal to the Government at Calcutta, 500 miles distant, and of course out of the reach of the poor inhabitants of Bhudoe.³³

³¹ Duthoit, pp. 4-11.

³² Reports of Judicial officers at various districts, Mirzapur by R.H. Rattray, 21 August 1814 in No. 2 in Bengal Secret Letter, 13 January 1816, Sir John Kaye's Mutiny Papers, Vol. 775, microfilm reel no. 321, fol. 254.

³³ Duthoit, fn. b, p. 12.

The end result of the report's recommendations had been the proclamation of Regulation VII of 1828 which affirmed the Raja of Benares' right to settle and access land in his Family Domains. However, preference in any new revenue settlement had been given to those who, in 1795, would have been recognised as zamindars, together with other provisions contained in the land settlements in operation in the Benares Division. All decisions made by the Raja were now subject to revision and final approval by a British-appointed superintendent. Raja Udit Narain Singh put up a stiff resistance to these proposed reforms by delaying, as long as possible, the commencement of a new revenue settlement and by a constant stream of letters and petitions to the Board of Revenue and the Governor-General. The Raja's objections and criticisms, although considered seriously by virtue of his powerful position and status, were considered ultimately to involve minor and trivial issues, most of which had already been discussed at length and rejected. In 1834, the Suddar Board of Revenue ruled that the new revenue settlement precluded the Monas Rajputs from reassuming their *taluqdari* rights over Bhadohi in its entirety but instead could only assume property rights that could be proven to currently exist.³⁴

Settlement operations were finally concluded in March 1835. Of the 1,132 villages in the pargana only in 204 sub-proprietary rights were said to exist, and of these the Monas Rajputs retained only 60 villages.³⁵ While the Raja of Benares had aimed to remove village zamindari rights, an objective that had been pursued with success, the ordinary *ryot* or tenant cultivating peasant was materially perhaps no worse off than in other districts of the Benares Division. Bird noted in his report that Udit Singh tended to protect and look after the cultivating peasantry as a means of weening them away from the influence of the village proprietors. Moreover the *ex-manzurdari* (ex-proprietors) were themselves believed by the British to be 'not entirely ruined' as they continued to maintain possession of their home farm or *sir* land which remained assessed at low rental rates.³⁶ Furthermore, Bhadohi was considered to be an exceptionally fertile and productive pargana. As one official remarked: 'no pargana in all the province of Benares is better cultivated or has an agricultural population so well-fed and clothed as Budhooe'.³⁷

This view does appear to be an overtly optimistic one, at least in regard to the position of the Rajputs. Certainly it may have been possible, as Bernard Cohn has noted, for ex-proprietors to maintain or improve their financial position through the cultivation of cash crops. For Rajput brotherhoods this would tend to depend on the size of the brotherhood and thus

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 27-29.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 34, 36.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

the amount of land available to each co-sharer for commercial cash crop cultivation. Larger clan communities continually faced an increasing minute sub-division of ancestral lands into increasingly uneconomic plots. Furthermore, this would depend on whether there were any enterprising individuals within a clan willing or able to make commercial decisions. Such individuals were not entirely absent amongst the Rajput clans; some Rajput families did engage in grain trading, and moneylending and were able to extend their land holdings, but they were exceptions. For the majority of the Rajputs their role as *thakurs* or lords (*rais* was the term used in Bhadohi) did not encompass any form of commercial enterprise which was looked down upon as rather demeaning and degrading. In the case of the Monas Rajputs the overall position of the clan appears to have declined with the loss of proprietary rights.

There is evidence to suggest that the traditional ruling Monas family had suffered a decline in its financial circumstances. W.R. Moore, in his capacity as a special commissioner appointed to investigate the extent of female infanticide amongst Rajput clans in the division, visited Bhadohi in 1855. During his investigations, Moore talked at length with Ajit Singh, one of the acknowledged heads of the clan at that time. Ajit Singh's family had in past times arranged marriages with the main families of the higher ranked Surajbansi, Bughel, Guhurwar and Surneth clans, the dowry of which was said to approach at times up to Rs. 1 lakh. Financial stringency had now reduced Ajit Singh to conclude marriages only with the junior branches of these clans. Even then the dowry demanded and paid was by no means insubstantial, usually amounting to Rs. 2,000.

It appears that Ajit Singh was a good deal better off financially than Udwant Singh and his immediate family. Ajit Singh held *manzurdari* shares in six villages, mostly in the Kondh *taluqa*. He, as well as a number of those Rajputs who had met Moore at Mondh in 1855, had lost *manzurdari* shares in villages prior to 1857 but had either retained land rights over their own home villages or were mortgagees of others, and in some cases even active land buyers at auction. In contrast neither Udwant Singh, his *diwans*, nor Jhuri Singh were listed as still holding *manzurdari* rights up to the 1850s. Nor were those Monas Rajputs who Moore met from the villages of Bhunda and Sherpur, both of which rose up in revolt. This may support the view that it was those who had lost the most economically were among those most active in revolt. For instance Bhola Singh, one of the *diwans*, had lost *manzurdari* rights over six villages in the decade prior to 1857. Certainly this aspect merits further investigation. At this stage, for example, we do not know the stance adopted by Ajit Singh and others in his position during the Revolt.³⁸

Economic grievances, it seems, were intimately interlinked with social grievances of the Monas as the traditional local magnates. There had been

³⁸ Ibid., Appendix M, pp. lxxxix and xci and Appendix N, pp. cvii and cix.

an evident fall socially in the prestige and esteem of the clan in relation to the relative ranking of Rajput clans in the region embracing the Benares Division and Oudh. It was precisely such an impression that Moore obtained from his conversation with Ajit Singh:

It was not difficult to see that even this descent in the scale [marriages to highly ranked Rajput junior clan branches] was galling to the pride of the old Thakoor, who longs to be able to contract as lofty marriages as of old...³⁹

Up to the Revolt the process of the gradual extinction of *manzurdari* rights continued seemingly unabated. From 1842 to 1866, some 154 *manzurdari* estates were purchased by the Raja of Benares.⁴⁰ In numerous instances the proprietors were ejected after the Raja's officials had falsified the revenue demand to create fictitious arrears in revenue or had credited current payments received to old balances. Internal disputes and litigation among the co-sharing proprietary bodies or court action against the Raja were further factors that contributed to the revenue arrears and the inevitable auction sale. In the period leading up to the Revolt, and for some time afterwards, British officials refrained from intervening to curb this worrying trend out of, according to Duthoit, a mistaken belief that the Raja would be willing to restore land title to the *manzurdar* once the balance in arrears had been paid. In reality this rarely happened.⁴¹

By the 1890s, the Monas Rajputs' seeming reluctance to cultivate their land directly except out of absolute necessity and their almost exclusive reliance on their small plots of *sir* land had reduced their position to one of impoverishment. As noted by Crooke:

They are now, as a rule, in great poverty, and till as tenants the lands their forefathers used to own. They are held in little estimation, and now-a-days give and take girls from the septs of the Gaharwar, Bias, and Bisen of Mirzapur and Benares.⁴²

Thus the fall in the ranking, and consequent social status of the clan documented by Moore a few years before 1857 had continued still further after the Revolt. Their uprising could therefore be seen as a last desperate attempt to regain lost ground.

³⁹ Report on Female Infanticide by the late W.R. Moore, Commissioner for Investigating the Extent of Female Infanticide in the Benares Division, London, 1859, in *India History Pamphlets*, Vol. XIII, p. 34.

⁴⁰ Between 1842 and 1865, 154 *manzurdari* estates were purchased by the Raja of Benares. In 1865 *manzurdars* retained possession of 102 estates. Duthoit, Appendix M, p. ixiv.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38 and p. 47.

⁴² Crooke, pp. 1-2

Loss of hereditary landholdings could also be seen amongst the Monas colonies in the district of Allahabad. In the *tahsil* of Handia, comprising the parganas of Meh and Kewai, Rajput proprietary landholdings had declined from 26 per cent of the total number in 1840 to below 20 per cent by the mid 1870s.⁴³ In this district, as in Mirzapur, one of the leading buyers of land at auction was the Raja of Benares. Keene has noted, in regard to rural rebellion in Allahabad, that the most prominent rebels were the large communities of dispossessed Rajput zamindars who, while they had lost their proprietary rights, still retained their prestige and influence within a village. This in turn gave them the power and resources to engage in prolonged guerilla warfare against the British in 1857 and 1858.⁴⁴

The Political Dimension

Conditions as they existed in Bhadohi in early June 1857 provided the Monas Rajputs with a unique opportunity to regain by force full political control of the pargana under one of their recognised leaders Udwant Singh. Redress through personal representations to British officials or litigation by dispossessed kinsmen had failed since as the pargana was considered to form a part of the private estate of the Rajas of Benares to be held by the Raja and his descendants in perpetuity, resumption of *talugdari* control over Bhadohi was a legal impossibility. It is therefore not surprising that the clan harboured a deep and bitter resentment towards the Raja. Crooke has remarked that the Monas Rajputs, during the 1890s, continued to recount stories of how Raja Bulwant Singh had fraudulently obtained a *sanad* for the pargana from the last ruling Monas Raja.⁴⁵ Whether true or false this highlights a prime motivating factor for rebellion—the potency of tradition, a shared grievance that was strongly held and a shared remembrance of a seemingly glorious past age. As the clan itself, and apparently perhaps more so its leading royal family, were in a much reduced condition, there was little to lose and everything to gain by overturning the Raja of Benares' rule. Such an action appears to have had historical precedents. During the periods of regional instability in the past, for example the Mughal wars against the Sharqi rulers of Jaunpur in the sixteenth century, the Monas Rajputs, or more precisely prominent individuals within the clan, made use of the chaotic conditions to claim and successfully assume the title of Raja. The absence of the coercive force of the British sepoy army to back up the levy force raised by the Raja of Benares, combined

⁴³ H.R. Nevill, *Allahabad: A Gazetteer of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Vol. XXIII, Allahabad, 1911, p. 130.

⁴⁴ George H. Keene, *British Administration During the Revolt of 1857*, reprint, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 91–92.

⁴⁵ Crooke, p. 1.

with the general conditions of anarchy and instability evident throughout the Benares Division, appeared to allow for the possibility of the resumption of rule over their ancestral domains.

Wilton Oldham, a long-serving official in the division culminating in the position of Collector of Ghazipur during the 1870s, has remarked that traditions relating to land rights were of vital political importance to agricultural communities and accounted for the tenacity with which the small proprietors of Ghazipur held grimly on to their land rights. If dispossession had taken place, the resulting grievances of those displaced were of 'a permanent and deeper seated' nature than those derived from any other cause.⁴⁶ Upon reflecting on the condition of the Rajput, Brahmin and Muslim ex-proprietors of the district in the early 1870s and their involvement in disturbances in 1857, Oldham came to the conclusion that they would be active participants in any future revolt that 'afforded even a tolerable prospect of success'.⁴⁷

The political aspect of the rebellion or as Keene had put it, their 'display of independence'⁴⁸ was so clear to British officials at the time that they, at least initially, referred to and interpreted the revolt in that light. Up to 1857, according to the official narrative of events for Mirzapur, 'the former Rajpoot owners had never been wholly uprooted' and consequently during the Revolt 'the head of this clan, Udwant Singh, assumed his ancestral title of Rajah of Bhadoee'.⁴⁹ Elsewhere it was noted that the events presented Udwant Singh with 'an opportunity of restoring the ancient supremacy of his family'.⁵⁰ At an early date the British were aware that suppressing disturbances in Bhadohi would be a far more serious matter than the sporadic acts of rebellion by a number of geographically scattered villages along the southern bank of the Ganga. In its early stages it was considered to be essentially a localised civil war within Bhadohi rather than a direct challenge to British rule. As the Commissioner of Benares, Henry Tucker, in a letter to the Magistrate of Mirzapur remarked that the British forces operating in the pargana were acting on behalf of the Raja of Benares 'whose battle we are fighting'.⁵¹ However unlike other areas of Benares Division, the British were surprised that Bhadohi should have become a centre of widespread revolt which would claim the life of one out of the two district officials in the division to be killed during the period of the Revolt. But surprisingly, despite a long history of turbulence, Bhadohi was regarded as less unstable and prone to insurrection than the Palwar Rajput-dominated parganas of

⁴⁶ Oldham, pp. 47-48 and p. 57.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁸ Keene, p. 119.

⁴⁹ Taylor, 'Narrative of Events', f. 883.

⁵⁰ Atkinson, p. 141.

⁵¹ H.C. Tucker, Commissioner, to St. G. Tucker, Mag. and Collector of Mirzapur, Benares, 16 July 1857, *FSUP*, p. 73.

western Azamgarh or eastern Ghazipur, a region that was believed ever ready for an 'Alastia', an attitude perhaps based on an erroneous belief of the strength of the Raja of Benares' hold on Bhadohi, particularly from after the period rapid land transfers beginning in the early 1820s.

Support for the Revolt

Linkages of support for the Monas uprising can be broken down into two components: ties and kinship alliances between the areas of clan settlement (internal linkages) and inter-clan or inter-caste support for the revolt (external linkages). In terms of internal linkages it is clear that a large number of kinsmen joined their lineage headmen in revolt, those doing so said to number at first up to 2,000. This would, if the 1881 census figures for Rajput clans are taken as to be reasonably accurate, comprise the bulk of the adult male population of the clan. This mass mobilisation on behalf of the leading families in 1857 can be explained by the fact that they were 'much looked up to in the *pergunnah*'⁵² and therefore had the influence and the ability to gather their kinsmen and lead them into rebellion. Potential leadership also appears to have extended downwards.

The British had assumed that the revolt would subside with the executions of Udwant Singh and his *diwans*, but overall leadership of the revolt passed quickly to Jhuri Singh. His force, although smaller, did at times number up to 1,000. Jhuri Singh is mistakenly referred to in some documents as a relative of Udwant Singh when, in fact, he and his family had once been dependents (servants or retainers perhaps?) of the Monas Rajas.

The clan itself was divided into two groups: those considered to be genuine bona fide Rajputs and those who had been adopted into the clan and were considered to be of inferior status. Jhuri Singh may well have been one of the latter. If this is so his support for the revolt, an involvement apparently based initially on the desire to avenge the execution of Udwan Singh, may well have served to widen the base of support for the revolt within the clan itself, and perhaps have acted to make it more 'popular' in a restricted sense. However Jhuri Singh was not an unimportant figure within the clan but carried 'much influence' in the area around his home village of Purupur.⁵³

Territorial linkages for rebellion extended throughout the main Monas clan settlements. Various Monas-dominated villages in eastern Allahabad assisted Jhuri Singh and they in turn became targets for British punitive raids. Significantly the parganas of Meh and Kewai in northeastern Allahabad formed the second largest area of Monas clan settlement. This part of Allahabad remained disturbed throughout the latter half of 1857, primarily

⁵² Trial Proceedings, *FSUP*, p. 79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

because of large scale rebel incursions from Oudh into these and other trans-gangetic parganas. The leading rebels in the pargana of Meh included the ex-zamindars of the villages of Busna Buretha, Bibipur, Junghai, Pokumee, Bullia Pilkinee and Sheepoorama. At one time or another Jhuri Singh stayed in each of these villages. In late October 1857, for instance, he was said to be, according to intelligence received by the British, 'endeavouring to raise up the rebels to more active rebellion against the British Government' while staying at the village of Busna Buretha.⁵⁴ This village and that of Junghai provided Jhuri Singh with armed followers and provisions. The British were not in a position to finally expel rebels from this region until the early months of 1858. Up until this time Jhuri Singh and his followers continued to hover around Bhadohi's border areas with Allahabad and Jaunpur. These areas provided a safe place of refuge and support as well as forming bases of operation for Jhuri Singh's repeated incursions into Bhadohi.

External linkages between Rajput clans were also a feature of the revolt. A number of Palwar Rajputs, under their leader Sarnam Singh, joined the uprising. Sarnam Singh had attacked the indigo factory at Pali in early June 1857, and was directly involved in the murder of the Assistant Magistrate. However, Palwar involvement remains at present obscure and references are tantalisingly brief. Based on numbers alone it may have been quite limited since in 1881 there were only some 500 Palwars counted as residing in the entire district.⁵⁵ Specific references to non-Rajput involvement are even more limited. The British attempted to arrest a Brahmin who was believed to have been a follower of Sarnam Singh. There is also a brief reference to a Chamar who was forced, despite his protests, to carry the decapitated head of Moore to the village of Abhaoli. Evidence of other low caste involvement is scant. It can only be suggested at this stage rather than conclusively proved.

Gautam Bhadra has suggested that peasant rebellion was fostered and organised on the basis of different levels of collective mobilisation found within a community or within a territorial area. At the primary level the

⁵⁴ PP, 1857-58 XLIV, Joint Mag. of Gopeegunge to the Commr. of Allahabad, Camp Hunoomangunge, 22 October 1857, p. 233. Overall Rajputs in Allahabad's trans-gangetic parganas had lost one-third of their former land holdings by the late nineteenth century. However the 1878 Settlement Report for the district notes that Monas Rajputs had managed to retain most of their ancestral land but were 'by no means in a flourishing condition'. *Final Settlement Report of the Allahabad District by F.W. Porter*, Settlement Officer, Allahabad, 1878, p. 52 and p. 54.

⁵⁵ *Census of India 1881*, NWP and Oudh Supplement, p. 59. These Palwars were probably not connected to the highly ranked Palwars of western Azamgarh and eastern Faizabad but may be Rajputs of inferior status who had assumed that clan's name. They may well have been originally adopted or lower ranked local. Rajputs and marriage alliances certainly are a possibility since the lower ranked Monas Rajputs tended to seek marriages with other clans within Mirzapur.

notion of a 'community' implies organisation around an ethnic group (in this case a single Rajput clan and its sub-clan branches) whose main aim is to resist the territorial encroachment of outsiders into their territory.⁵⁶ The strong Rajput clans such as the Palwars and Sengars had, prior to 1857, succeeded in doing so but not the Monas Rajputs. They had put up resistance as evidenced by the turbulent and lawless reputation that Bhadohi held from the commencement of British rule in the region. However, they had failed ultimately to stop the Raja of Benares from gradually eliminating their zamindari rights. In the case of the Monas Rajputs a key factor in enabling the clan to rise up was the preservation of the internal unified structure of the clan. The Rajputs had not been ejected or displaced but continued to reside in their home villages, cultivating their own *sir* lands, subject only to the customary low rental rates for such land. Their position is similar if not identical to that of the more numerous clans of Jaunpur or Ghazipur who were increasingly forced to subsist on their *sir* holdings. Therefore the Monas clan structure was itself a potential base upon which to mount rapid and large scale armed insurrection.

An equally important ingredient for rural insurrection was the possession, according to Bhadra, of collective consciousness, a widely shared and presumably consistent memory of a clan's past history. This primordial loyalty, a retention of tradition and custom was a feature of the Monas clan. They certainly wished to return to the former conditions of power and eminence of the clan and they shared a hostile attitude towards the Raja of Benares. This solidarity was reinforced by the fact that the major settlement and original centre of the clan was in Bhadohi. Some of the villages in the pargana that supplied provisions and followers for the revolt were also traditional centres of disturbance. The villages of Bhunda and Sherpur were considered by the British authorities to be 'hornet's nests' of insurrection with a prior history of defiance and autonomy. The village of Bhunda had itself been threatened with destruction two years prior to the Revolt and during 1857, the Commissioner of Benares remarked that the village had 'been a thorn in our side since the commencement of the disturbances'.⁵⁷ Moreover community solidarity expressed itself in a number of ways. The Monas Rajputs in Mirzapur were seemingly able to draw into revolt Monas settlements in other districts through kinship ties or perhaps by

⁵⁶ Gautam Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of Eighteen-Fifty-Seven', in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Writing in South Asian History and Society*, Delhi, 1985, p. 242. H.M. Elliot in discussing clan settlement and kinship linkages based on the *chaurasi* (a territorial and often purely notional village community consisting of 84 villages) believes Bhadohi to have formed traditionally a much larger community of around 360 villages. Henry M. Elliot, *Memoirs on the History, Folk-Lore, and Distribution of the Races of the North Western Provinces*, edited by John Beames, Vol. 2, London, 1869, p. 56.

⁵⁷ *PP*, 1857-58 XLIV, The Commr. of Benares to the Sec. to Govt., Central Provinces, Benares, 3 November 1857, p. 262.

example of their actions. Other features included the lack of assistance and cooperation the British received from villagers as to the whereabouts of the rebel leaders, the mass flight and desertion of villages and the well organised system of intelligence established by the Rajputs. For instance, the British were well aware that rebel spies were present in the town of Gopiganj and that any military raid to seize Jhūri Singh would have to be carried out under conditions of secrecy. One such raid failed, according to the British officer in charge of the force, due to the delaying tactics of a local thanadar which delayed the march to a village at which Jhūri Singh was reported to be staying and thus enabling him to escape.⁵⁸ The noted Jat rebel leader in the district of Meerut, Shah Mal, possessed a similar intelligence network which was considered by one local British official to be an indication of widespread support if not sympathy for his cause by the rural population.⁵⁹ At best in Bhadohi and eastern Allahabad the British believed that the population paid them "only a divided allegiance".⁶⁰ Within Bhadohi the rural population was well aware of the cause and objective of the revolt. One Brahmin told British officials:

Since Udwant Singh, Ram Baksh Singh, Bhola Singh Monases, had been hanged, all the people of the Monas caste in pargana Bhadohi decided to kill Mr Moore, one other Englishman and Munshi Darshan Lal and to eject the Raja Saheb from the pargana. Everybody in the pargana knew this.⁶¹

This passage is interesting in that it mentions that the revolt was confined basically to the Monas Rajputs and may not be, as Ranajit Guha has suggested, transformed from a 'dynastic feud' to a widespread popular rebellion. It was certainly much broader than an act based on the grievances of a handful of leading representatives of the community but it clearly did not assume the proportions of a popular revolt. It appears to have been on the evidence at hand more restrictive, but low caste servants and village labourers bound by ties of service, traditional respect, would doubtlessly have followed, willingly or unwillingly, their village masters into rebellion.

Conclusion

The Monas uprising was evidently a politically conscious act. It represented an attempt, seemingly realisable at the time, by the clan to eject the Raja of

⁵⁸ Asst. Mag. of Mirzapur to the Commr., op. cit., p. 263.

⁵⁹ Bhadra, p. 237.

⁶⁰ *PP*, 1857-58 XLIV, Narrative of Events, CP, from 3 October to 14 November 1857, p. 219.

⁶¹ Deposition of Thakur Dayal dated 13 July 1857 attested by Makkham Lal, Superintendent of Police, Gopiganj, Mirzapur, Almora Mutiny Basta—File containing reports and depositions, *FSUP*, p. 83.

Benares' representatives and supporters from Bhadohi and to restore the clan's position as the local ruling power. Such a restorative rebellion was by its very nature a conservative one. It drew its strength and support from kinship ties which extended outwards from the clan's long established ancestral homeland of Bhadohi to smaller colonies situated in Allahabad and Jaunpur. There is little evidence to suggest large scale participation by other Rajput clans, except, of course, the Palwar Rajputs. A revolt that derived from specific grievances and circumstances affecting the Monas Rajputs, it perhaps could not have been otherwise. It lacked the wider support for rebellion on the scale seen, for example among the Rajputs, Bhuindars and Pathans of eastern Ghazipur or the joint uprising on the scale of that of the Palwars and Rajkumars in Oudh, western Azamgarh and Jaunpur.

A unifying factor and an important driving force behind the revolt was the Monas clan's shared collective memory and community solidarity: the widely shared and expressed desire of the Rajputs to redress long-standing as well as comparatively recent economic, social and political grievances. These can be seen as the primers for armed insurrection of the clan in 1857. These grievances were closely interwoven. Resentment of the initial loss of political autonomy was reinforced by the loss of zamindari rights which, in turn, resulted in a reduced economic position and inevitably reduced individual status and prestige, although this process may not have been a uniform or even one. There, no doubt, would have been a few wealthier members, as there were among other clans in the region. The spark which could change discontent into action, in suitable circumstances, was the preservation of the clan's internal unity and the influential position it still retained in Bhadohi in the period leading up to the Revolt. Without this feature the uprising would probably have been a patchy, small scale and rather brief affair. This explains why, after the elimination of leaders of the leading Monas family, the revolt could continue under Jhuri Singh. Its focus may have changed after the initial uprising—if anything the focus shifted to one more solidly against the British rather than the supporters of the Raja of Benares. Its scale also may have declined, but its political character throughout its duration, contrary to the opinions expressed by contemporary and subsequent British officials that the Monas 'rebels' were 'a band of half armed murderers and plunderers',⁶² should not be in doubt.

⁶² St. G. Tucker, Mag. of Mirzapur to H.C. Tucker, Commr., 22 August 1857, Mirzapur Collectorate Pre-Mutiny Records Book No. 223, *FSUP*, p. 253.

A note on Buddhism and urban culture in Kushan India

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Buddhist architecture, sculpture and literature in Kushan India have won worldwide fame with their high achievements. However, while enjoying the aesthetic values of those works, one cannot help wondering to what extent they are compatible with Buddhist principles, either in theology, or in religious practices. Themes which seem quite irrelevant to Buddhism but showing exuberance and the pleasures of life appeared on Buddhist monuments and literature in various artistic forms. Those features were so peculiar to Kushan India that they became less obvious or totally disappeared from India later. Even though the Buddhist schools which developed and matured in this period characterised the Buddhism transferred to China, Chinese converts did not inherit all the puzzling features from their teachers. To understand the meaning of those cultural achievements, one must look into the special urban background of Kushan India.

The Kushan period in Indian history is famous both for its rich material remains and for the dearth of surviving literary records. The numerous urban sites in Central Asia and the north Indian plains make the material culture of this time much more accessible to archaeologists than that of less urbanised periods. The extensive commercial network within the Kushan territory and with the outside world scattered Kushan coins over a large area, reaching as far as the east Indian coast. Gold coins, cast on a Roman standard perhaps in order to stimulate foreign trade, appeared in north India for the first time in history.

However, the Purana texts maintain almost total silence about this important state; they merely mention a foreign regime named Tuchara or Tuhara in the north. The only available literary sources are the Buddhist and the Jain votive inscriptions, and the Buddhist and Jain texts composed around the Kushan period. Among those literary materials, the Buddhist Sanskrit texts provide the most vivid descriptions of the urban prosperity

and cultural developments of the period. Buddhism seemed to have some intrinsic links with this urban culture.

The well-known Buddhist Sanskrit texts composed from the first to the third century AD are *Mahāvastu*, *Saddharmapundarika*, *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, and Aśvaghosha's works, such as *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*. Except for the *Mahāvastu*, those books were translated into Chinese starting in the second century, often in more than one version. Those works touch on various aspects of urban life of that period. Great merchants were generous patrons like their predecessors who are described in the Pali canon. However, they seem more affluent than earlier traders and carried on trade on a larger scale. Their caravans crossed deserts, and their ships sailed the oceans. Their donations to Buddhists also increased in value. Instead of donating only provisions for monks they built stupas which they decorated with gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, pearls, coral, and other precious stones. To provide commodities for the trade, Buddhist texts say, artisans engaged in many kinds of handicrafts, and organised themselves into guilds.¹ Entertainers and service professions were also active in the cities.

A sophisticated culture based on this urban economy flourished. In the cities where the caste hierarchy was not as rigid as in the rural areas, wealth and achievement could improve the status of urbanites more efficiently than in the caste ridden villages. While Brahmins in villages looked down upon the polluting urban culture, urbanites showed their superiority over country folk through different styles in clothing, hair dressing, and ornaments, and in their particular entertainments, manners, and achievements in arts. The authors of the Buddhist texts, who, on the one hand, denounced the attractiveness of this world culture, on the other hand, also felt obliged to record it. From the very beginning, there was a contradiction in Buddhist theology and practices. Though the Buddha preached the instability and illusiveness of material wealth, the *sangha* derived its whole livelihood from the support of laity. Rich patrons-cum-traders such as Anāthapiṇḍika were held with high esteem among early Buddhists. The contrast of the two sets of values in Buddhism became sharper by the Kushan time. Theologically, the Mahayana school stressed the absolute emptiness of the material world, while Buddhist religious practices and monastic life got entangled in the urban hedonism of that time.

This tension reflected in the literature created special difficulties for translators in later periods. Because the Buddhist translators were missionaries at the same time, they often had to choose between conveying the major principles of the religion to an audience of alien cultural background, or translating the texts literally. Faced with an audience who could not appreciate the sophistication of urban culture and who could not see the

¹ Xinru Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China, Trade and Religious Exchanges, AD 1-600*, Delhi, 1988, pp. 36-37.

the necessity of incorporating this literature into Buddhist texts, the translators changed the texts to suit their mission. Here I want to compare Sanskrit texts of the *Buddhacarita* by Asvaghosha and its Chinese translation to highlight the special quality of Buddhism and the urban culture of the Kushan period.²

The Chinese translator of *Buddhacarita*, Dharmaraksha, was probably a learned Indian monk. Upon joining the sangha at the age of six, he began to study Buddhist doctrine intensively and was engaged in translation for more than forty years (AD 412–54).³ Yet as Samuel Beal, the English translator of the Chinese *Buddhacarita*, has noticed, 'sometimes it would seem that he omitted intentionally whole passages which would be either unintelligible or uninteresting to Chinese readers'.⁴ The passages missing from the Chinese version fall into a few different categories: descriptions of the structure and scenes of a city;⁵ similes based on Hindu mythology and customs of Hindu origin, such as giving cows to Brahmins after a childbirth;⁶ and depictions of female beauty, including ornaments, dress and form.⁷

Because passages containing names and stories from Hindu mythology or describing some Indian customs would have made no sense to the Chinese reader, omitting them is understandable. But the conspicuous absence of a long passage describing the city of Kapilavastu in the very beginning of the first chapter can hardly be attributed to the ignorance of Chinese readers. So too the passages about urban scenes and female beauty. Even though the architecture of Kushan India was very different from that of fifth century China, the descriptions of the lofty palaces, the splendour of jewels, arbors, gateways, banners, and streamers,⁸ were not hard to translate and be made comprehensible to the reader. The ornaments and dresses of Indian women might have differed significantly from those of Chinese women, but their eagerness to see the handsome prince which prompted them to neglect their own appearance and manners⁹ was easily understandable. Even though the Chinese might have held different aesthetic views from those of Kushan Indians, descriptions of female beauty were not totally taboo in fifth century China. Although the translator did not omit

² Since I just want to point out obvious changes in contents without discussing points of nuance, I refer to already published English translations of the texts for convenience.

³ *Kao-seng Chuan* [Biographies of Famous Buddhist Monks], compiled by Hui-chiao, Liang dynasty (AD 502–77), *Tripitaka [Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo]*, Vol. 50, pp. 335c–337b.

⁴ Samuel Beal, translated from Chinese, *The Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king [Buddhacarita]*, reprint, Delhi, 1975, p. xxxv.

⁵ For example, I, 2–8, see E.B. Cowell, *The Buddha-Karita of Asvaghosha*, reprint, Delhi.

⁶ For example, I, 46–49; II, 44, 89, *ibid*.

⁷ For example, III, 14–22; IV, 29–52; VIII, 22, 28–30, *ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 2–8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 14–22.

the passage where the bodhisattva felt disgusted by the sleeping postures of the female entertainers in the court, the Chinese version gives an impression of absolute ugliness, 'like corpses thrown together',¹⁰ while the Sanskrit version portrays a group of withered beauties who 'bore the aspect of a lake whose lotuses were bent down and broken by the wind'.¹¹ It is clear that, in addition to the obligation to make the literature understandable to the Chinese readers, the translator, as a missionary, also felt it was imperative to convert the Chinese to Buddhism.

It was not the difficulties in literary translation which forced him to drop those passages, but his missionary impulse. He certainly grasped that the original texts contained a contradiction; they denounced material wealth and beauty of forms as empty and meaningless, and at the same time took great pains to describe the denounced objects. Although Dharmaraksha was from India, he lived in a time far removed from the urban prosperity of the Kushan period. While working in the quite different environment of China, he saw that these passages, products of the urban culture of Kushan India, were not only useless, but even harmful to his sacred mission.

However, Āśvaghoṣa, writing four centuries earlier, certainly did not sense any contradiction, nor did Buddhist artists of his time. Both the Gandharan art and Mathura sculptures frequently depicted splendid city buildings, elaborate hair styles and clothing, and entertaining scenes. Balconies and high windows in the art works show that two or more storey houses were popular at that time.¹² Starting from the beginning of the Christian era, cities in north and northwest India commonly used burnt bricks for construction. The improvement in building materials made the technically more complex housing structures possible. Sculptures based on the Buddha's life story visualised exactly what Āśvaghoṣa described in the *Buddhacarita*. In the artworks based on the Buddha's life anecdotes, such as Maya's dreams,¹³ the sleep of the female entertainers,¹⁴ the Buddha's flight from the city,¹⁵ the artists' depiction reflected the fashions in housing and clothing of their time. So too the art piece based on the story of the conversion of Nanda, an anecdote connected with another work of Āśvaghoṣa, *Saundarananda*.¹⁶ As the artists could do little to decorate the image of the Buddha, they lavished strings of beads on the necks of the young prince before he reached enlightenment and the bodhisattvas, and decorated their fancy hair styles with various ornaments.

¹⁰ Samuel Beal, I, 5, 386–92.

¹¹ E.B. Cowell, V, 49–62.

¹² See a Gandharan art piece now in Japan, *Gandara no chokoku* [Gandharan Sculptures], Nara, 1985, fig. 92, also many sculptures from Mathura.

¹³ John Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara*, reprint, Delhi, 1980, fig. 94.

¹⁴ Ibid., fig. 92–93.

¹⁵ Ibid., fig. 114.

¹⁶ Ibid., fig. 121.

Although the fashions shown on those sculptures were embellishments of Gandharan artists on styles at the time of the Buddha, the above-mentioned pieces were still quite compatible with Buddhist principles because of their connection with the Buddha's life stories. However, many merry-making scenes, carved on stupas and monasteries, perplex Buddhologists, who are hardpressed to see any link between them and the Buddhist principles.¹⁷ Throughout the Kushan territory, many art pieces depicting entertaining, hunting, drinking and other scenes of cultural life, often in an urban setting, are associated with Buddhist monastic sites. For example, in Airtam near Termez, the famous frieze of musicians decorates the entrance to a Buddhist shrine. These musicians playing on harp, lute, small drum and other instruments, and the figures holding garlands and a bowl have long puzzled Soviet Indologists.¹⁸ There are many scenes depicting drinking and entertaining in Buddhist Gandharan art. The 'family drinking scene of five figures' from Hadda, Afghanistan, portrays two younger figures playing music, and an older man holding a wine bowl, with an older woman holding a serving jar.¹⁹ A number of step risers from a Kushan Buddhist monument near Swat have often been treated as typical examples of Hellenistic influence on Buddhist art. The artistic style of these sculptures, clothing of the figures, and utensils such as music instruments, drinking goblets and wine jars display obvious Western impact.²⁰ The stance, the ornaments, and attire of the figures all suggest people of high culture.

Among samples of Mathura Buddhist art, the urban setting of the entertainment scenes is more obvious than at Gandhara, especially in the recently discovered artworks from the stupa of Sanghol.²¹ In addition to the *Śālabhañjikā* who holds a tree branch or being surrounded by trees and animals, there are beautiful yakshis who are acting in the streets, by an upstairs window or a balcony. They are playing musical instruments, cleaning themselves and putting on make-up, looking into a mirror, teasing children, performing acrobatics and drinking. In the background, often some people from the window or balcony are taking an interest in the events happening on the street, or they are just enjoying themselves doing similar activities. The discovery of Sanghol confirmed the connection between Buddhist

¹⁷ One explanation is, 'Since human existence, according to Buddhism, is guided by several elements—*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*,—it is not surprising to find each of these aspects reflected in sculptural representations, the bacchanalian scenes fall, of course, into the category of *kāma*. The contrast of Buddhist spiritual virtues with sensual pleasures was probably intended to point out the impermanence of material values.' Stanislaw Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1986, p. 109.

¹⁸ G. Bongard-Levin and A. Vigasin, *The Image of India*, Moscow, 1984, p. 208.

¹⁹ John Marshall, p. 38, figs. 49, 50, 51; *Gandara no chokoku*, fig. 93.

²⁰ Stanislaw Czuma, figs. 87–90.

²¹ S.P. Gupta, ed., *Kushana Sculptures from Sanghol (1st–2nd Century AD)*, *A Recent Discovery*, New Delhi, 1985.

monasteries and bacchanalian scenes in the artworks in the Mathura region.²² A corner railing pillar from a Buddhist stupa in Mathura region gives a beautiful example of a combination of Mathuran and Gandharian art styles on a bacchanalian piece. Following the rhythm of music played by celestial girls above, two half-nude intoxicated women are dancing around a big goblet, while another couple of women are playing pan piper and the clapper, also around drinking vessels. Even the yaksha and yakshi standing underneath the major figures are enjoying wine.²³

Scholars have offered different explanations of these merry-making scenes around Buddhist sites. The Russian scholar, Sergei Oldenburg, suggested that the five musicians of Airtam represent 'the five great sounds of Indian mythology',²⁴ others have tried to trace them to the scenes of the Buddha's life.²⁵ Some Japanese scholars suggest that these scenes represent pleasant future lives or life in heaven.²⁶ This explanation is plausible because in some Sanskrit Buddhist texts, such as *Mahāvastu* and *Śaddharmapundarika*, devotees were encouraged to make donations in the expectation of a better material existence in future lives, and the Buddhas' lands and heavens were said to be full of wonderful entertainments. Another explanation could be that, artists of the time, like Aśvaghoṣa, and other Buddhist writers, were contrasting the impure mundane life with the pure life of the sangha. On the back of some pieces of merry-making scenes, there are sculptures on authentic Buddhist topics. On the back of a Mathuran style railing—a girl wearing a garland, a couple on the balcony above—there are three small sculptures of Jataka stories.²⁷ On the back of a *Śālabhañjikā*, a couple of devotees are worshipping a stupa.²⁸ Even on the dancing bacchanalian piece mentioned above,²⁹ a small corner was saved for an anecdote from a Jataka story. However, these sculptures with serious Buddhist connotations are far too small and inferior in artistic quality to compare with these masterpieces of pleasure-seeking scenes. Instead of advocating the pure life of the sangha, the contrast is more likely to tell people how wonderful worldly pleasure is. No matter what the intention of the artists was, those artworks underline the proximity of the Buddhist sangha with the

²² Before the discovery of Sanghol sculptures, it was not clear whether the sculptures showing merry-making scenes were parts of Buddhist buildings in Mathura region, although Vogel suggested that a sculpture showing a 'bacchanalian group' in Mathura Museum was once seated in front of a Buddhist temple to support a baton, J. Vogel, *Archaeological Museum at Mathura*, 1908, p. 85.

²³ Czuma, fig. 42.

²⁴ G. Bongard-Levin, p. 208.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Gandara no chokoku*, p. 77.

²⁷ Czuma, fig. 36.

²⁸ Ibid., fig. 33.

²⁹ Ibid., fig. 42.

urban life of the time. Living in this environment, facing a laity who expected better material rewards in return for their donations, neither Āśvaghosha nor the artists could afford to ignore that laity.

To further illustrate the background of the Buddhist development in early centuries AD, I will take the drinking scene, or bacchanalian scene, as an example of Buddhist artwork reflecting the commercial economy of the time. From the many bacchanalian scenes depicted on toilet trays and other non-Buddhist objects from Taxila, we know drinking was popular from Parthian times onwards in the northwest region. Allchin's study of the 'condenser' from Shaikan Dheri and other sites in northwest and north India suggests that India began to produce strong alcohol by distillation during the Kushan period or even earlier.³⁰ India also imported wine from the West. Wine was shipped to Barbaricum, the port on the mouth of the Indus, and Barygaza near modern Baroach.³¹ Roman amphora, probably serving as containers of wine, were found in many sites of the period. The Buddhist sangha was not oblivious to the potential of the flourishing business of drinking. The evidence from Shaikan Dheri suggests that a Buddhist shrine there was used to store or to sell liquor for a long time.³² In a monastic site Devnimori in Gujarat, some Roman amphora sherds covered with a black residue were found. Chemical analysis suggests that the residue was sedimentation of wine.³³

The drinking vessels appearing in Buddhist art were common types in the cities of that time. Pottery of the Kushan urban sites does not show a uniform texture or firing technique. The colour ranged from red to grey, the texture could be fine or coarse, the surface could be polished or rough. But a few vessel types covered the large area from the Central Asian territory of the Kushans to north India. A goblet with a high or low stand and cup with carinated shoulder were among those types. While the goblets were most popular drinking vessels appearing in the bacchanalian scenes, be they Buddhist or non-Buddhist, the carinated cup also occasionally appears.³⁴ The association of Buddhism with producing, trading, and drinking alcohol reveals that the tension between Buddhist doctrine and the hedonistic tendency in Buddhist literature and art was the natural outcome of the commercial environment and urban culture of the Kushan period.

³⁰ F.R. Allchin, 'Evidence of Early Distillation at Shaikan Dheri', in Maurizio Taddei ed., *South Asian Archaeology 1977*, Naples, 1979.

³¹ *Periplus Maris Erythraei* [The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea], translated and annotated by W.H. Schoff, New York, 1917, pp. 39, 49.

³² F.R. Allchin, p. 779.

³³ P.N. Mehta and S.N. Chowdhary, *Excavations at Devnimori*, Baroda, 1966, p. 77. As an evidence that those amphora were containers of wine, one may refer to the many amphorae pieces that were found in Arikamedu dated to the same period. Resin, a common constituent of Mediterranean wine has been found on the sherds.

³⁴ *Gandara no chokoku*, fig. 93.

The urban culture of Kushan India was a product of special historical circumstances. While northwest India was a stronghold of Hellenistic and Roman cultural influence, horse-riding rulers from Central Asia—Sakas, Kushans, etc.,—also built their regimes in this region. Cities where different peoples mingled together automatically created a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Though long-distance trade provided the economic links for people who spoke different languages, there was still a need for an ideology to facilitate communication between various communities. Among the established religious systems in India, Buddhism was the most open and inclusive one. It was difficult for a foreign trader to join a caste in the Brahminical system. Jainism was also very much a communal religion. As there was no restriction on becoming a Buddhist devotee, many foreigners naturally sought protection from and made donations to the Buddhist monasteries. Kushan rulers might not have been sincere devotees as Buddhist records try to convince us,³⁵ but at least they were not orthodox Brahmanists and had patronised Buddhism. This kind of ruler was good enough for an unorthodox religion to take advantage of the economic and social environment. It was the wealth of the urban economy and royal patronage which strengthened Buddhist institutions, nourished Buddhist art, and stimulated the propagation of Buddhism. Meanwhile, the values of its patrons encroached into Buddhism, which already inherited the weakness of depending on donations for survival. This contradiction in Buddhism actually existed throughout the entire history of the religion, but reached the extreme and bore the most impressive fruits in Kushan India.

³⁵ The Kushan kings attributed divinity to kingship and emphasised the worship of ancestors through *devakula*, Narain, pp. 266–68.

Book Reviews

AUNG TUN THET, *Burmese Entrepreneurship: Creative Response in Colonial Economy*, South Asian Research Publications Series No. 126, South Asian Institute, University of Heidelberg, Stuttgart; Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989, xvi + 197 pp.

This compact and unpretentious post-doctoral monograph addresses itself to a relatively modest objective of questioning the 'conventional wisdom' on the subject, namely, of the absence or weak articulation of Burmese entrepreneurship during the colonial period. The conceptual framework of analysis developed here, rests essentially on the application of the marginally modified 'continuum model of entrepreneurship'. Entrepreneurship is broadly seen as a more or less continuous set of functions extending from the Schumpeterian innovative function to the Kirznerian arbitrage mode to the purely routine activity.

The picture of the evolution of Burmese entrepreneurship that emerges is quite interesting and relatively uncomplicated, though a trifle oversimplified. The idiom of discourse and analysis is overtly nationalistic despite the author's claim to the contrary. The 'Indianists' should be only too familiar with the general line of argument. Pre-British economy is characterised variously as 'subsistence' and 'stagnant' which was not conducive for the growth of merchant entrepreneurship. Ironically, the study itself throws up evidence which is not consistent with this oversimplified characterisation: as for instance the reference to the leavening stream of entrepreneurial talent during the late Konbaung period.

The rest of the story also tends to develop along fairly predictable lines. The Burmese colonial economy is perceived as an 'open dualist economy' comprising of a modern export-oriented enclave and a large backward agricultural sector. Social pluralism along racial lines is perceived as integral to this economic dualism, a process strengthened by the substantial immigration of Asians, particularly Indians. While conceding the preponderance of immigrant aliens (British, Indians, Chinese) over the modern sector, the author is inclined to accept the relatively unorthodox position, that there was extensive participation by Burmese at all levels and especially in the middle position. This represents the point of departure of this study and is in consonance with its basic concern of perceiving entrepreneurship in a more varied and differentiated context.

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SAGE New Delhi/Newbury Park/London

The initial chapters on Decapitation of Burmese Entrepreneurship deal, on the basis of essentially qualitative evidence and at a very general level, with the policies of racial discrimination of the colonial state. While these were perhaps at a certain level undeniably significant in retarding the growth of Burmese enterprise, yet in the absence of even the faintest picture of the position and magnitude of indigenous enterprise in the first half of the nineteenth century the discussion tends to remain largely at a rhetorical level. Quite interestingly the study itself provides some evidence which would seem to suggest that the deindustrialisation process was perhaps not uniformly similar across industries. The case of Twinzas and handloom industry would seem to point towards adjustment and adaptation. The specific case studies of decapitation of 'mechanical lighters', the Burma Spinning and Weaving Company, the shipping industry and timber trade, though not uninteresting, tend to be somewhat sketchy and descriptive. A slightly more rigorous economic analysis with a quantitative element, apart from enriching the study may well have revealed a picture somewhat more complex than seems to emerge from this study.

Though not entirely free of problems, yet the two core chapters on 'Burmese Economic Niches' and the 'Emergent Burmese Entrepreneurs' are about the most fascinating, in as much as it attempts to come to grips with identifying the space which enabled the Burmese to entrench themselves. The cameos on U. Wike, Ma Sa Bai, U. Rai Gyaw Thoo, U. Po, among others, are quite revealing and reinforce the fact that a good number of the larger entrepreneurs managed to carve a niche precisely in the interstices between the so-called dual sectors. Middlemen trade in timber, rice, rice-milling and financial intermediation were, among the more important spheres of activity where Burmese presence was becoming significant. Immigrant alien entrepreneurs exercised a pervasive influence over these very spheres and the nature and extent of control by them as well as its implications for the growth of Burmese entrepreneurship has been treated rather inadequately.

While the final section of the study is an interesting account of the economic and social basis of large-scale outmigration from Upper to Lower Burma, it is woefully short of providing an explicit analysis of peasant entrepreneurship even at the level of routine activity. Undoubtedly, the study, as the author candidly admits, raises more questions than provides answers. Precisely for these reasons it is a useful addition to Burmese economic history.

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AMIYA K UMAR BAGCHI ed., *Economy, Society and Polity. Essays in the Political Economy of Indian Planning in Honour of Professor Bhabatosh Datta*, Calcutta, Oxford University Press, 1988, xiii + 271 pp. with subject and name indexes, Rs. 100.

This volume of essays honours one of our most eminent and humane teachers of economics, who has distinguished himself also in the 'public' domain both in the sphere of the economist and on matters to do with education. All the contributors are from the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and their physical and intellectual proximity has produced a greater unity of purpose and conception than is usual in *Festschriften*.

The essays are concerned with different aspects of the Indian planning and development process since 1947; most of them are of a 'historical' cast, offering retrospective evaluations as well as being concerned with contemporary issues. Nripen Bandyopadhyaya considers the course of land reforms policy; in a complementary piece (ranging wider than is suggested by the title 'Foodgrain Stocks and Prices') N. Krishnaji looks also at output variation over time and across regions since 1961. Nirmala Banerjee ('The Unorganised Sector and the Planner') discusses what has become 'a residual category for the planner', beginning with basic problems of definition. Debdas Banerjee and Anjan Ghosh examine the impact of the planning process and public investment on regional disparity, and argue that paradoxically cumulative and self-reinforcing inequalities are more characteristic of the post-Independence period than of the years before. In the most explicitly 'historical' of the essays, which begins with developments during the Second World War, Saugata Mukherji ('The Private Sector and Industrial Policy in India') is concerned with business attitudes to and influence on the shape of planning. The last two essays (Partha Chatterjee and Asok Sen, 'Planning and the Political Process in India: Duality and Differentiation' and Amiya Kumar Bagchi, 'Problems of Effective Demand and Contradictions of Planning in India') bring together many of these sectoral themes in a consideration of what the editor describes as 'the macro-economic, macropolitical and macrosocial context of Indian Plan exercises, and the developments in the economy, whether planned or unplanned'.

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SASKIA C. KERSENBOOM-STORY, *Nityasumangali, Devadasi Tradition in South India*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, 226 pp., Rs. 150.

This book, dedicated to the 'The Guru and the Sampradāya' seems far

removed from the critical and benign ways of interpreting Hindu cultural traditions nurtured in Western consciousness during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both of which had distanced themselves from the 'irrational subject' of their scrutiny. This appears so primarily because, in methodological terms, the author situates herself as a subject in her analysis. It is her aim as a participant observer to delve into the practice and form of the devadasi system. The science of semiotics is used to unravel the cultural meaning of not only the person of the devadasi but all the actions associated with her and this is done by investigating the 'poesies which gave rise to the necessity of the phenomena of the devadasi', (p. xviii). The work emphasises upon the power that the meaning attached to the rituals have in the practice of Hinduism and thus, quotes Huizinga to the effect that 'No scepticism is possible where the rules of a game are concerned, for the principle underlying them is an unshakable truth.' (p. xvii)

The book is divided into three parts. Part I contains a detailed description of the cultural history of South India and the context in which the devadasi fits into this representation of history. Part II focuses on the function and form of the devadasi tradition within the temple ritual of Tamil Nadu and Part III deals with the rites of passage of the devadasis based on field surveys done in Tamil Nadu. Given its overall conceptual context it is not surprising that the work is almost solely devoted to the symbolic significance of the devadasi in the cultural milieu of the major dynasties that ruled Tamil Nadu.

In her genuine concern to overcome the hitherto faulty culturebound evaluations of the devadasi tradition, the author rests on the intuitive appreciation of the 'powers' said to be inherent in the mode of thought and the practice of 'living Hinduism' (p. xv). It needs, however, to be stated that the ideology of the devadasi system originated and grew in a given socio-historical setting and cannot be idealised as being apart from it. How the capacity of the patrons to 'provide a living, shelter and platform for the display and the development of the arts', (p. 48) originated should also have been analysed. Further, the notion of the timelessness of the 'sacred' and 'pure' and its adjunct of the 'ever auspicious' in the content, form and practice of the devadasi tradition tends to implicitly construct an unchanging romanticised image of the temple girl. The impression given by the author that the temple dancing girls as subjects of this highly potent thought process and intimate aspect of Hinduism, actually experienced this special relationship with the temple, its functionaries, and political patrons is a matter of opinion.

It should be recognised that in pre-modern India the temple girls found it exceedingly difficult to exercise any independent access, control or 'share' in the property apportioned to them in return for the services rendered by them. Furthermore, the devadasi system which was of some significance to

the ritual in the temple, in fact rested on the idea of sexuality inherent in the modes of appellation for these girls and also in their close physical proximity to the religious and other powerful people who controlled the village community and the temple. Therefore, the temple girls, located in a rigidly defined patriarchal society, could be sexually exploited by the elites who ostensibly supported them. Though the life styles of the devadasis stood outside the mores of the traditional family structure they flourished as a necessary adjunct to it, and this meant that they became part of the disparities that were bound together in the patriarchal value system of the times. It is this integration of the ideology and ritual of the devadasi system and its ritual to the larger framework of the community's and family's economic and social system that has been completely submerged in Kersenboom-Story's project of understanding the system in its 'true essence'. Since Kersenboom-Story herself has noted: 'The more refined version of the devadasi-*nityasumangali*, arose in the context of a strong, economically supported centre' (p. 47), it would also be correct to suggest that once this economic support began to wane the ideological apparatus, however legitimate it purported to be, could not sustain the 'power of the auspicious and its human manifestation in the form of the temple dancing girl'. This casts doubt on the author's contention: 'The truth is, however, that South Indian culture has always expressed the necessity of a *nityasumangali*, an ever-auspicious female who would effectively deal with the dangerous divine.... And indeed, such *nityasumangalis* have not been eradicated; according to my opinion, they exist in the cultural consciousness of the majority of South Indians even in our days' (p. 49).

Apart from the author's biases in interpretation, a large part of her efforts have gone into meticulously describing the rituals associated with the devadasi tradition. The book is, therefore, a mine of information on this and is also a valuable record of oral history. It is well brought out with a useful subjectwise index and with several charts and diagrams to illustrate the meaning of ritual pertaining to the devadasi tradition.

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LOLITA NEHRU, *Origins of the Gandharan Style*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989, xxii + 230 pp. with 195 illustrations and 4 maps.

The origin of Gandharan art has been a much debated topic for a century. Therefore one is at first sceptical about the interest of reopening the debate, but one has to read Lolita Nehru's book to be convinced of the opposite.

To start with, the author recalls the various hypotheses put forward to explain the Graeco-Roman influence in Gandhara. On account of the Begram and Arikamedu excavations, M. Wheeler insisted on the importance of the

Romans in the region from the end of the first century AD. However, J. Marshall put the accent on the Parthian contribution to the Hellenisation of Gandhara. Earlier, A. Foucher had championed the hypothesis of the Hellenisation of the region dating back to the Greek conquest and he had presented Gandharan art as a synthesis between Hellenism and the local Indian tradition.

As she herself claims, Nehru's book is a tribute to Foucher's far-sightedness. The novelty lies in the fact that she brings forth the long missing evidence, basing herself on a critical reconsideration of the data from Taxila and the results from recent excavations: chiefly Ai Khanum, Khalchayan, Dalverzin and Butkara (Nehru's documentation ends in 1982, when the manuscript was completed).

The focus of this study is what the author calls the 'Formulated Gandharan Style' comprising the Kushan period (she keeps in mind AD 78 as the date for the accession of Kanishka to the throne).

The first part of the work ('The contributory styles') is devoted to a comparison of the Graeco-Roman, Bactrian, Parthian and ancient Indian sculptural traditions with the 'Formulated Gandharan Style' and to an examination of the more global issue of the Hellenisation of the Orient.

Gandharan art has inherited from the Western Classical tradition the representation of time as a succession of snapshots contrary to the Indian treatment of time as a continuum (e.g., the different moments of Buddha's life are represented over as many juxtaposed panels, separated by plain spaces or inset motives such as pilasters or trees).

By contrast, Western influence is less clearly evident in the representation of space. While some reliefs show a sparse treatment of the background and a sense of spatial perspective, others reflect the typical Indian profusion of details and characters piled up one on top of the other.

Likewise, in the portrayal of characters in the Gandhara reliefs, the Graeco-Roman realism is juxtaposed with the conventionalism of Indian and Parthian traditions (in particular, the typical Parthian frontality).

Nehru notes that this juxtaposition, often seen on one single relief, of different stylistic norms (e.g., one conventional figure with a realistic portrait) leads to what she calls their 'diffusion'. According to her, this 'juxtaposition-diffusion' pattern rather than 'synthesis' is one of the characteristics of Gandharan art and could be explained by the strength of the local Indian tradition that might have, for many centuries, 'resisted' Hellenisation. The author observes the same phenomenon in Parthian art where the local West Asian/Achaemenid substratum was very strong. On the other hand, in Bactria where the local tradition seems to have been less important, the synthesis (represented at Dalverzin) was more rapidly achieved.

It is in the second part of the work ('The origins of the Gandharan style') that Nehru's contribution is most original. She demonstrates that the Formulated Gandharan Style, far from appearing suddenly in full maturity at the start of the Kushan period, is the outcome of a slow evolution since the third century BC, in which one can distinguish two phases.

The most recent phase that Nehru calls the 'formative period' covers first century AD and it is to her credit to have documented it. Henceforth, to the few already known stone sculptures of Taxila can be added a group of sculptures found at Butkara I (attributed by the excavator D. Facenna to the turning point of our era and by Nehru to the second quarter of first century AD) and mainly a group of terracottas and stuccos that Marshall had found on the Dharmarajika site. He first attributed them to first century AD but finally placed them in the fourth-fifth century AD, persuaded that the use of stucco and terracotta in Taxila was not much developed prior to that time. Nehru proposes to go back to Marshall's first dating which she judges to be more in conformity with the data of the excavation. Thus, the sculptures corpus of first century AD in Gandhara (whether in stone, stucco or terracotta) is considerably enriched, underlining the importance of this period in the development of Gandharan art and showing that in first century AD Hellenistic and Indian styles coexist while the synthesis is only starting to take form.

In the same phase, except for a few toilet-trays, there is scant evidence of artistic activity in Gandhara prior to the beginning of our era. This is due to the fact that the Greek levels of Taxila, Charsada and Shaikhhan Dheri were but summarily excavated. However, the example of neighbouring Bactria, which is well documented, shows the extent of Hellenisation in the region.

Nehru's book pertains to art history but she has succeeded in avoiding the pitfalls of the discipline. To limit the subjectivity of her judgements, she makes her criteria for comparison as explicit as possible (i.e., representation of time, of space, of the human form). To avoid dating based on style alone, she relies on archaeological data as much as the evidence allows.

Nonetheless, one can question the meaning of concepts like 'juxtaposition' or 'synthesis' which are the basis of Nehru's study and, more globally, the foundations of art history. Where does 'juxtaposition' stop and where does 'synthesis' start? What is the cognitive content of such a distinction? Nehru is quite aware of these issues but in the introduction to her book she explains that she will not delve into these intricate questions. And she was right! For it would have deprived us of the pleasure of reading this fine, precise, well documented and richly illustrated study.

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LAURENCE W. PRESTON, *The Devs of Chinchvad: A Lineage and the State in Maharashtra*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, xi + 273 pp., £30.

This book embodies the results of wideranging research focused on a narrow theme: the relation between a Brahmin *inamdar* lineage and the state in Maharashtra from the early seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries. In this study Preston shows a deep knowledge of both English and Maratha sources, and makes masterly use of what he rightly calls 'the most underused sources for all aspects of Indian history' — the millions of documents in the Peshwa Daftar.

The Devs were Desastha Brahmins who were in high favour with the Chatrapatis and the Peshwas, and gradually acquired extensive *inam* rights, mainly in the vicinity of Pune. Already by the middle of the eighteenth century both lineage and inheritance were large enough to give rise to a bitter family wrangle that was ultimately resolved by the Peshwa himself in 1744–45. The Maratha state, Preston comments 'would involve itself in the descent of *inam* for the corporate good of the lineage if it saw that disputes between the kin were compromising the integrity of state grants'. The solution was eminently practical, if not wholly in conformity with the Shastras: some of the *inam* was to descend impartibly, and the rest partly by the usual law of inheritance.

The British conquest threatened the incomes and privileges of the Devs. After prolonged disputes, many petitions, and much correspondence, they lost the income from their mint rights, transit duties, and the annual gift from the state. Their land rights came under the scrutiny of the Inam Commission at mid-century, at the same time as an adoption dispute broke out. The Commission deprived them of a fraction of a village, but the state would not directly intervene in the internal dispute. Litigation continued till 1895.

By concentrating on the relation of lineage and state, Preston excludes many interesting questions. We learn nothing of how the Devs managed their lands—except that they employed sharecroppers—and little of how they spent the revenues—except certainly on feeding pilgrims, possibly on bribery, and allegedly on debauchery. Their raiyats complained to the British of injustices, but we learn nothing of their grievances. The members of the lineage themselves figure more as loci in a genealogical table than as living individuals. Given the authors' evident command of the sources, one can only regret that he did not attempt a more wideranging study.

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P. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change, Malabar: 1836-1982*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1989, 289 pp., Rs. 195.

The author in this well-researched, empirically rich book begins with the general proposition that land reforms were not liberal gifts from enlightened governments but have been historical processes necessitated by protracted peasant struggles. He then proceeds to describe the different phases of peasant struggles between 1836 and 1970, narrates the implementation of land reforms and analyses the social changes and changes in land system between 1970-79 brought about by the implementation of land reforms.

The study is of Malabar, at the macro level and of Kodakkad village at the micro level. Though much could be said in appreciation of this method two doubts remain. First, the reasons given by Radhakrishnan for selecting Kodakkad for special study are not convincing: the village was in the erstwhile South Canara district of Karnataka and not in Malabar and there were noticeable differences in agricultural practises and tenurial structures between these two districts. No wonder the history of tenancy agitation and reform was also different. Second, since considerable differences existed between south and north Malabar determined by the specific history of these regions, would it not have been more fruitful if the author had taken two villages, one in the erstwhile Palghat taluk, for instance, and the other in Chirakkal taluk, for a comparative study?

In analysing land and society in pre-British Malabar, Radhakrishnan shows a preference for caste-based categories rather than for class based ones. The analysis of social change brought about by land reforms is also based on caste categories. This severely restricts efforts to draw parallels from or make generalisations of developments in other areas. For example, caste groups like Maniyanis, Vaniyas and Muvaries are not found in many areas even in north Malabar. Obsession with caste categories also prevented the author from analysing social change in class and gender relations while discussing village power structure. Radhakrishnan states that the majority of Nairs continue to be associated with rightist parties whereas in the figure he has supplied, 50 per cent are with the CPI(M). Moreover, Radhakrishnan fails to establish convincingly the connection between social change and land reforms. Thus after asserting that land reforms accelerated the partition of joint families, he notes that of the four Namboodiri *illams* partitioned after 1970, two were partitioned primarily due to poverty and family feuds among women.

Radhakrishnan uses blanket categories and multi-meaning terms. Can the Tenancy Agitation, for example, be characterised as a peasant struggle? The Tenancy Agitation was spearheaded by the intermediary *Kanakkar*, and though G. Sankaran Nair, one of the leaders of the agitation, noted in

his diary that 'he was making a grave omission in not going about the poorer classes of tenants',¹ no efforts were made to organise them. As per the Act of 1929, the intermediary *Kanakkar* succeeded in gaining security of tenure for themselves while denying it to *Verumpattakkar* under them. The earlier proposals of Logan and the first tenancy bill presented by M. Krishnan Nair were substantially modified in course of time. This was due to, as K.N. Panikkar has pointed out, the interests and attitude of social classes connected with land not as factors *per se* influencing government policy but in their interconnections with the interests of the colonial power.² Radhakrishnan fails to bring out the complexities of the tenancy agitation. He also gives a communal interpretation of the Mappila uprisings and then confuses the issue by stating that the Mappilas lacked an ideology.

It is when we try to generalise from the findings of this study that we encounter the weakness of a purely empirical study. How far were the organised and assiduous pressures of the peasantry necessary conditions for the introduction of land reforms in Travancore and Cochin?

These states did not breed any peasant movement of significance till the forties. Yet a series of land legislations from the Jenmi Proclamation in 1867 to the Land Tax Proclamation of 1946 had been passed in Travancore. In Cochin the Tenancy Act of 1914, Tenancy Act of 1938 and the Verumpattakkar Act of 1943 were passed apparently without sustained and strong pressures from the peasantry.

These and other related developments cannot be explained within the framework provided by the author. Bogged down by his own empiricism Radhakrishnan fails to indicate the larger forces which shape regional processes. Nor does he take into account the general direction in which the economy of Kerala moved within which the changes in rural Malabar occurred.

As A.R. Desai has asked — why do academics hesitate to examine agrarian reform in specific areas within a state in the context of basic normative legal, class and gender premises laid down in the Constitution?

All these, however, do not diminish the value of this micro study. The detailed descriptive facts, the numerous tables and the data unearthed through strenuous fieldwork provide raw materials to social scientists and would stimulate further research into the questions Radhakrishnan has raised.

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¹ Diary of G. Sankaran Nair, 1 September, 1923. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

² K.N. Panikkar, 'Agrarian Legislations and Social Classes: A Case Study of Malabar', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 May 1978.

D. RAJASEKHAR, *Land Transfers and Family Partitioning*, Trivandrum, Oxford & IBH and CDS, 1938, xii + 90 pp., Rs. 66.

The book under review is an important addition to the meagre literature on the concrete analysis of the emerging dynamics of land, class and caste relationship in the Indian countryside. If the merits of the book were to be fully realised, it should be read *as if* it is in two parts: the *transfers part* (for brevity, consisting of the first five chapters) and the *partitioning part* (consisting of the introduction and the sixth chapter). The *transfers part* concerns with a systematic analysis of the land transfers in a dry village in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Beginning with 1891 the analysis of land transfers in terms of caste and size-class are discussed in relation to the socioeconomic, agro-climatic and institutional, including legislative factors. The analysis is divided into four periods: 1891–1948, 1948–61, 1961–74 and 1974–84. The first period experienced two phased changes in land transfers. It saw the dispossession of land by the Brahmins as well as Harijans and Valmiki in favour of the dominant agricultural castes like Reddies. While the Brahmin dispossession was due to migration, the Harijan and Valmiki dispossession was due to debt. The second phase witnessed transfer of land from Brahmins and dominant agricultural castes, to intermediate agricultural castes like Yadavas. The second period (1948–61) saw the land transfers from the large holdings (Brahmins) to upper agricultural castes. The third period (1961–1974) marked by a decline in economic activity largely due to the vagaries of monsoon, witnessed a loss of lands by the small and marginal Harijan and Muslim households to the small and middle farmers like Yadavs who had their income propped up by non-agricultural sources like sheep-rearing and petty trade. The fourth period (1974–84) saw the revival of village economy and the distribution of surplus lands to Harijans as well as overall transfers in favour of small and middle farmers from Valmiki, Yadav and Muslim communities.

It is the *partitioning part*, dealing with the relationship between land transfers and family partitioning, that is uneven in quality both methodologically and substantively. Its strength is in extending the mere hypothetical debate to concrete analysis and in incorporating caste as an important element along with the size-class. The weakness of this part is the methodology. First, there is no clear *a priori* relationship established between land transfer and family partitioning, leaving a certain vagueness whether it is the land gain (or loss) that is the cause (or consequence) of partitioning! Second, in spite of the realisation that besides the size of holdings, there are a number of endogenous and exogenous factors whose determining roles change with the changing conditions, it is rather dubious to explore whether Krishnaji's hypothesis holds for the first period or Shanin's hypothesis for the second or the third period.

In spite of some problems in reconciling Tables 3, 4 and 15 some minor mistakes like footnote 4 on page 55 and the appearance of crops in chapters 2 and 5 and their disappearance in chapters 3 and 4, it is the set of conclusions emanating from the historical analysis of size of holdings and caste that are of real significance than the ones drawn from a shaky relationship between transfers and family partitioning. The study, a painstaking work of economic history based on a wealth of village level data, otherwise not easily available and sought after, commends itself to all those who are interested in the dynamics of caste, class and land relations in India by raising important questions which need to be explored extensively if one should have an authentic analysis of the process which is so time and region specific in a country as diverse as India.

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TAPAN RAYCHAUDHURI, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1988, 369 pp., Rs. 170.

Literary and historical studies of nineteenth century Indian discourses have now triumphantly entered a renewed contest with imperialism: this time with the colonial power-knowledge syndrome. The impressive declaration of war, in actual practice has so far been more or less limited to the assertion that the nineteenth century colonised/nationalist self was constructed by the post-Enlightenment Power-Knowledge system which inscribed its own meanings upon an alien order. Raychaudhuri's vivid and highly erudite study of three major intellectual and spiritual leaders of nineteenth century Bengal is a welcome relief from the aridities of this 'critical moment' whose self-righteous polemical wrath somehow fails to rise very much above the tautological or the commonsensical.

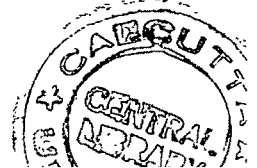
Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Swami Vivekananda were, in different ways, engaged in the same project: to balance a hurt pride in a condemned and misunderstood ancestral heritage (the only autonomous domain in a colonised world) with real experiential problems with, and criticism of, an oppressive indigenous tradition. As Raychaudhuri sees it, Bhudev was the least troubled of the three with the problem of selection. Happy offspring of a conventional Brahminical background, he retained a serene faith in its validity and relevance for the contemporary Hindu, despite his exposure to, and partial, qualified admiration for aspects of western knowledge. By contrast, Bankim's relations with both his Hindu ancestors and heritage remained far more problematic and his negotiation with traditionalism, too, was conflict-ridden. Swami Vivekananda, in his early life, was a most radical iconoclast till he encountered

the simple faith of Ramakrishna. His Hindu evangelicalism combined a trenchant critique of almost all current Hindu practices at home with an equally uncompromising defence of an abstract conception of its inner spiritual excellence abroad. His life as a wandering mendicant exposed him more immediately and directly to the phenomenon of Indian poverty. He evolved the panacea of social service to counter it, and made this materialist concern an integral part of his spiritual quest.

All three figures are generally associated with a rather undifferentiated notion of Hindu militancy, or with forms of revivalism. Raychaudhuri's work individualises that concept and reveals complex layers within it. Nonetheless, he too, occasionally makes too sharp and absolute a distinction between acceptance versus rejection: admiration versus criticism, as if nineteenth century expressive forms were not too permeated with satire and irony to resist the fixing of very definitive readings.

The chapter on Bhudev for instance, makes inadequate distinctions between the forms of traditionalism. There is too easy an equation between Bhudev's relatively tension-free relations with his orthodox father—whose orthodoxy is surely different from that of the Bhatpara Brahmins—and Bhudev's tranquil acceptance of tradition. The latter's Hindu College training in western rationalism, for which he retained a troubled respect, his greater interest in Western than in Indian literature, his affection for heretical fellow students like Madhusudan Dutt, his membership of the Freemason Lodge, his preference for Victorian child-rearing practices—these are precisely the significant ruptures in a pattern of acceptance which demand a closer reading, and which Raychaudhuri somewhat summarily dismisses as 'bizarre' choices.

The section on Bankim on the other hand, recognises perpetual inner conflict and divisions as the organising principle structuring Bankim's discourse. But here too, there is, at times, a rather unfortunate tendency to explain ambivalence through biographical incidents. Doubts about colonialism are reduced to a series of personal encounters with racist Sahibs and tinpot local white despots. The crucial debate between the Reverend Hastie and Bankim needs fuller discussion, as does the very distinctive form of intellectual sociability (*adda*) that had developed around Bankim's home and his journal *Bangadarshan*. The discussion of Bankim's construction of communalism is also disappointing because a complex, multifaceted and shifting argument has been reduced to simply 'passionate hostility'. Since literary representational strategies are lost sight of, the significance of the recurring theme of inter-communal romance in Bankim's *Durgesh-nandini* and Bhudev's *Anguriya Binimoy* is also lost. On the whole, Raychaudhuri, while pointing out the deep admiration for Islam in all his protagonists, fails to generalise on the implications of this for people usually associated with militant Hinduism.



The section on Vivekananda is overwhelming in its detailed information about his genealogy, preferences and comments. Here, again, we find too insistent an emphasis on 'life experiences'. For instance, it is assumed that his travels as a monk sensitised Vivekananda to Indian poverty. However, Indian poverty had long been an intensely debated issue and Vivekananda's departures from prevalent modes of analysis need discussion. So does his borrowing or departures from other models of social service and evangelical forms, like the Christian missionaries, the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. Given Raychaudhuri's sensitivity to biography, his silence on two differing resolutions within the same family—Vivekananda's vision of resurgent Hinduism and Bhupendranath's terrorist and later, Marxist beliefs—is puzzling. Much more care should have been bestowed on understanding Vivekananda's silences, relative lengths of discourses on different themes, discrimination in selection of issues—for example, his notions of Hindu 'womanhood' abroad which aroused the Ramabai Circles's protests.

Finally, the thinness and flatness of Raychaudhuri's accounts of interactions with the woman's world—the world of mothers, sisters, wives, daughters—contrasts starkly with the authors' accounts of the interactions with the male world, which are vivid and individualised. A related gap is the absence of any account of interactions with the world of popular culture and religion. Despite these gaps, which indicate possibilities of fresh research, nineteenth century intellectual history will be stimulated and enormously enriched by this study.

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JOHN F. RICHARDS ed., *The Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries experienced an increase in monetary liquidity which the human civilisation probably had not witnessed before on such an absolute or relative scale. The mining of central and south American silver deposits, together with the Japanese silver, created new sources of supply which greatly enhanced the capacities of the commercial economies of India and China to monetise a whole series of transactions. Successive Chinese governments from the time of the Sung dynasty had sought to convert land taxes collected in the form of rice and silk into cash payments, a process which reached a new stage of development in the Ming times. Likewise, the Mughal revenue system of Akbar, like the earlier Chinese measures, attempted to articulate a theory and practice of public finance modelled on notions of money and prices. The essays contained in the present volume examine in detail various aspects of money and currency

usage in the Mughal empire from the age of Akbar to the early eighteenth century. While some of the conclusions and interpretative motifs are still subject to argument and further analysis, in the main the volume greatly adds to our understanding of how the Mughal financial system actually worked in practice.

The essays fall into two broad thematic categories: those which deal with the numismatic and technical aspects of Mughal currency and those which attempt to place Indian monetary practices in the context of wider historical issues. Thus John Deyell's essay deals with the question of how under Akbar, Mughal revenue and financial authorities were faced with the problem of standardising a currency system which had previously only responded to the chaotic dynastic divisions of the subcontinent's commercial economy. The question of a unifying political sovereignty was closely related to that of creating an imperial economic system. As Deyell aptly puts it: 'the nascent Mughal kingdom in India could easily have developed into a decentralised network of regional military despotisms with the emperor being merely the first among equals. Akbar's decision to foster a strong currency is an indication of his assessment of the progress of his rule, and of his nascent intention to fashion a centralised state.' (p. 17) These themes are pursued in Marie Martin's essay on the metrology of contemporary coins and in an interesting analysis Stephen Blake traces the outlines of spatial hierarchies inherent in the Mughal administrative practice of dividing the empire into provinces, districts and sub-districts, all expressed through the medium of revenue collection and currency flows. It is apparent that Mughal monetary practices gained immensely from the international movements of gold and silver, triggered by the American and Japanese mining of precious metals. Om Prakash and Irfan Habib in their respective essays point out the detailed implications of this development in terms of the contact between European trading companies and indigenous mint authorities, and Habib in particular suggests how a tripartite currency standard based on gold, silver and copper came into being. The real *tour de force* in the volume is a long, thoughtful, and highly original contribution by Frank Perlin, which demonstrates just how far down into the depth of the rural economy the monetary practices had penetrated. Drawing on the detailed evidence from the seventeenth and eighteenth century Marathi sources, Perlin is able to show that a large number of ordinary people depended on the circulation of copper coins, cowries and even monetised almond shells to conduct their daily economic life. Bankers, mint masters, sarafs, and small traders, able to control and direct the supply of these semi-token currency, were also in a position to control large areas of economic activities. The editor of the volume, John Richards, who himself has contributed a perceptive and well-researched essay on the monetary integration of Khandesh in the Deccan, is

to be congratulated for having produced such an interesting and scholarly collection.

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DIETMAR ROTHERMUND, *An Economic History of India*, London, Croom Helm, 1988, x + 214 pp. with annotated bibliography and index.

Anyone who has taught a first course on modern Indian economic history must have had occasion to despair at the lack of suitable texts to guide the beginner. So the arrival of a book that the publisher promises is 'a compact synthesis of the economic history of India', which explicitly adopts a chronological organisation 'in order to portray history as a process' (Preface). One's heart sinks, however, almost immediately at the subtitle of the book ('From Pre-Colonial Times to 1986') and the early realisation that the author does indeed intend to begin with the structure of 'the' traditional economy (which means here the economies of the *pre*-Islamic kingdoms), and to end with the third budget of the Rajiv Gandhi government. If one excludes the annotated bibliography and index, the text is a bare 189 pages. The task might make the bravest blanch.

These initial misgivings are partially allayed. In fact, as Rothermund makes clear in his Preface, the primary focus of the book is the twentieth century, more particularly the First World War and thereafter. This is rather more manageable and occupies something like two-thirds of the book, about equally divided between the pre-1947 experience and the post-Independence period.

The discussion which precedes it is basically the setting of the stage. The years from 1857 to the First War are dealt with in two chapters, the broad themes of which are the formation of the home market 'as a dependent adjunct of the world market' (p. 45), and the limits to industrialisation inherent in the structure of colonial rule. The period of Company rule ('parasitical symbiosis') is dispensed with in 11 pages; and the promise of an economic history 'from pre-colonial times' finds bare fulfilment in the first two short chapters, one of which races from the pre-Islamic kingdoms to the 'military feudalism' of the Mughals to the seventeenth century inflow of silver, price rise and the onset of systemic 'crisis'; the other dealing with maritime trade and the arrival and consolidation of European power.

Obviously these chapters are written in the broadest possible terms. They are readable and there are several sensible things in them: for instance, the warning against supposing that Bengal plunder contributed in any *direct* way to the first English industrial revolution (p. 18), or the emphasis on appreciation of land values as a factor retarding the flow of capital to industry (p. 62).

Nevertheless, an inevitable consequence of the brevity is a tendency to slide over complexities and to offer wild generalisations not as heuristic devices but as supposedly firmly established conclusions. For example, the student is blandly told that 'prices doubled in India in the period from 1595 to 1637' and that 'from 1591 to 1639, the circulation of silver coins trebled in India' (p. 6). Such utterly spurious precision is surely avoidable. The brevity also sometimes leads to the merely formulaic. It may be perfectly true that the Company's concern with remittances and the readiness to finance exports after 1833 led 'to a system of export-led immiserisation rather than export-led growth' (p. 24), vent-for-surplus banalities notwithstanding, or that in the second half of the nineteenth century 'the home market ... grew up under the tutelage of the world market ... as a dependent adjunct': but some discussion is needed of the mechanism and the structure of markets in the first case, and an explicit comparison with some other primary exporters within the evolving nineteenth century pattern of specialisation in the second case.

The chapters on twentieth century developments prior to 1947 are more satisfying, in good part because Rothermund has given himself more room. Currency and exchange rate questions are dealt with at some length 'because they are of central importance for the British control over the Indian economy', but the treatment is sometimes rather opaque: official concern (and that of the City of London) with maintaining the exchange rate through the Depression, for example, could have been better explained. The transmission mechanisms which brought the Depression to India are given more careful attention than is customary, and this is welcome and useful. Even here the text is still not free of *obiter dicta*, crying out for elaboration or supporting evidence. And, while not disagreeing with the general thrust of the argument, this reviewer feels that some greater awareness of the complexities might have been communicated: for instance, the influence of City's predilections on the *British* economy might have been hinted at (the rupee was not the only over-valued currency in the 1920s); similarly, while Swedish policies during the Depression are offered as an example of how 'a national government of India would have probably risen to the challenge' (p. 102), a mild caveat, at least, might have been inserted about how the indubitably national government of Britain acted.

As an *independent* account of the post-1947 events, there is little in the last part of the book that is compelling, and little that the Indian student cannot find dealt with elsewhere with a greater attention to detail. The errors and lapses of judgement and loss of perspective might have been avoided if the story had been brought to a close sometime in the 1970s, say. But the decision—an unusual one—to take the story forward 'to show the continuity of the structural problems' (Preface) is wholly welcome. Rothermund

does not say so, but in addition to enriching our understanding of the present, it might also serve to temper our assessment of the past.

In sum then, the book is lively and readable and fills a gap at a certain level, though it is a pity that Rothermund did not give himself more space. Some of the discomfort that one feels might then have been dispelled, and the book might have seemed less declamatory.

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Ethnicity and trade in Surat during the dual government era: 1759–1800

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Since the early pioneering work by such scholars as B. A. Saletore,¹ A.I. Chicherov,² and Surendra Gopal,³ in more recent years our knowledge of the pre-colonial Indian middle classes in general, and the merchant class in particular, has increased by leaps and bounds thanks to the efforts of a numerous group of scholars.⁴ However, many aspects of this topic still remain unexplored. A good example of this is the problem of the ethnic composition of the Indian merchant class. Whereas we have some general ideas on this subject, it must be admitted that they are based on very few hard data. Accordingly, the first aim of the present paper is to fill this gap by offering a case study of the ethnic composition of the merchant class of the port city

¹ 'Forgotten Gujarati Brahman Banker of 18th Century', *Indian Historical Records Commission: Proceedings of Meetings*, XXX (1956), pp. 155–160.

² *India: Economic Development in the 16th–18th Centuries, Outline History of Crafts and Trade*, Moscow, 1971.

³ 'Gujarati Shipping in the Seventeenth Century', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 8,1, 1971; 'Nobility and the Mercantile Community in India, XVI–XVIIth Centuries', *Journal of Indian History*, No. 150 (December 1972); and, more recently, *Commerce and Crafts in Gujarat, 16th and 17th Centuries*, New Delhi, 1975.

⁴ My own understanding of this topic has been greatly influenced by the writings of Iqtidar Alam Khan, S. Arasaratnam, Sushil Chaudhuri, Ashin Das Gupta, Teotonio R. de Souza, V.D. Divekar, B.G. Gokhale, M.J. Mehta, M.N. Pearson, A. Jan Qaisar, and Dilbagh Singh.

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The abbreviations used are listed at the end of the article.

of Surat during the years 1759 to 1800. At the time when it was jointly ruled by an English 'Chief' and a Mughal Nawab, Surat was still a populous and important centre of trade, home of an active and indigenous merchant class.⁵ Hence the selection of this place and chronological period provides a meaningful case study.

In order to reach the goal set for the present paper, I will begin by giving an overview of both the trading and ethnic world of Surat during the dual government era. Then, I will examine the main sectors of the trading economy of Surat and assess the relative importance of the role played in each of them by the various ethnic groups.

The Ethnic Composition of the Surat Merchant Class

During the dual government era, the largest part of the city population was made up of Hindus and Jains, (the Jains being, for all practical purposes, a section of the wider Hindu community). Most of the Hindu (and Jain) merchants of Surat belonged to one or the other of the several sub-castes of Hindu (and Jain) Banias. The Nagar Brahmins and the Khatri made up further segments of that same communal group which, throughout the present paper, we shall call 'the Hindu merchants' or 'the Hindu section of the merchant class'. Although some kind of communal organisation—or, rather, several communal organisations—did exist, it is difficult to judge what kind of solidarity bound the members of each *jati*, let alone the Hindu section of the merchant class as a whole. For example, we know that the Surat Khatri were divided between a minority of wealthy merchants⁶ and a majority of indigent and turbulent weavers. Whereas the English records give the impression that the latter had some kind of communal organisation which protected their interests, this organisation does not seem to have encompassed the community magnates.⁷ Again, we know that the Nagar Brahmins had a *Panchayat* which dealt with social matters affecting the

⁵ Michelguglielmo Torri, 'In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class During the Dyarchic Era (1759–1800)', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 19, 3, 1982 and 19, 4, 1982, *passim*.

⁶ One Khatri magnate, who appears in a list of principal merchants and *shroffs* drawn up in 1752, was Shivrao Teckchand. He was one of the two merchants (the other being Jagannath Laldas) who acted as a go-between in the secret deal between some influential Mughal nobles and the English Chief, John Spencer, when the latter was preparing for the 1759 expedition. FRS, 30 April 1752, and Bombay Political, Secret and Select Committee Consultations, 14 January 1759 (John Spencer's letter of 11 January 1759, para. 6). For examples of Khatri merchants discounting bills of exchange worth lakhs of rupees, see FRS, 8 July 1786 and 9 July 1796.

⁷ For one among several examples showing the Khatri weavers acting as a body, see FRS, 10 October 1795 (the *arzee* of the weavers of the Cuttree caste). In the English records, there is no comparable example of either the whole Khatri community or the Khatri merchants acting as a unified group.

members of the *jati*, but which split down in the middle while trying to arrive at a decision on one of the questions which it was supposed to judge.⁸ As far as the Banias at large are concerned, up to the 1750s, one of them, Jagannath Laldas, is often indicated in the English records as the 'Head of the Banias', a title which can be construed as implying a leadership role *vis-à-vis* the whole section of the Hindu merchants.⁹ However, for the whole dual government period, no further indication about a leader of the Banias is to be found in the English records or elsewhere. Which means that, whereas Jagannath's descendants inherited his status as 'Heads of the Banias',¹⁰ their political or economic role became of such little consequence as to go unnoticed by the English rulers of the city. On the contrary, what did not go unremarked in the English records was the strife brought about by the religious quarrels which, at the end of the century, split the Banias into competing factions, fighting bitterly for the control of a holy idol, and going so far in their enmity to threaten to start a civil war amongst themselves.¹¹

If the Hindu merchants were far from being a homogeneous social group, the situation of the Muslim merchants was still more complex. In fact, we should speak of a Muslim/Arab cluster of merchants rather than of a Muslim community. Many small and intermediate operators active on the route to the Middle East were Arab merchants, *nakhudas* or brokers residing in Surat. They must have had some kind of communal organisation in order to represent their interests as, in the English records, there is a reference to a Shaik Sulla who, in 1772, is indicated as 'the Head of the Arab merchants'.¹² Most of these Arabs were Sunni Muslims, but some of them appear to have

⁸ FRS, 22 September 1792 (consultation and translate [*sic*] of a declaration ... made by the caste of Nagur Brahmins...).

⁹ Jagannath Laldas, who belonged to a Jain *jati*, was a direct descendant of Bhimji Parak and, as such, the hereditary *nagarseth* of Surat. See Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c. 1700-1750*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979, *passim*. Das Gupta remarks on the fact that the *nagarseths* were indicated in the English records as the 'Heads of the Banias' (p. 87). Even in the 1750s, a period not covered by Das Gupta, Jagannath was often designed as such—namely 'Head of the Banias'—and, sometimes, appears acting in this role. See, for example, FRS, 19 May and 29 December 1752. However, my own reading of the English records covering the 1740s and the civil war of 1747-1759 has left me with the distinct impression that, during that period, although Jagannath was politically very active, his role as leader of the Hindu merchants was nominal. For example, during the 1759 English expedition against Surat, Jagannath did not even try to rally the Hindu merchants behind the English war effort. On the other hand, some Hindu merchants appear to have been active in organising the defence of the city against the English. See Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Surat during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: What Kind of Social Order?', *Modern Asian Studies*, 21, 4, 1987, pp. 683-687.

¹⁰ On this see Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, pp. 88-89, and fn. 2, same pages.

¹¹ For Example, FRS, 24 December 1794.

¹² FRS, 16 May 1772.



been Lebanese Arabs and we know of a Joseph Faraone who, judging from the name, was a Maronite Christian.¹³

The Arab residents of Surat made up a sizeable part of the Muslim merchant class. However the English records leave the impression that the single largest group of Islamic businessmen in the city was made up of Bohras. Although one of the main merchants in the 1760s and 1770s, namely Mulla Fakharuddin—a descendant of the great merchant prince Mulla Abdul Ghaffar—was a Bohra, a perusal of the English records indicates that the bulk of the trading activities carried out by the members of that community was in the hands of a group of small and intermediate operators.¹⁴

Besides the Arabs and the Bohras, who made up the majority of the Muslim sector of the merchant class, there were the Chellabi family and the Mughal aristocracy. The Chellabis were of Turkish origin and had moved to Surat from Iraq at the end of the previous century.¹⁵ The head of the family during most of the dual government period was Saleh Chellabi, possibly the wealthiest Surat shipping merchant of his days. His brother Ibrahim and his successor Tahar were themselves important shipowners, but other members of the family appear to have been intermediate traders.¹⁶

As far as the Mughal aristocracy is concerned, we know that the Surat Nawabs had a long-standing habit of carrying on their own trade, thinly disguised as an exchange of gifts between rulers.¹⁷ Besides, in the 1780s and 1790s, the ruling Nawabs and one of the main nobles, the Bakshi, entered trade in a grand way, and became shipowners. While the Bakshi limited himself to coastal trade, Nawab Mir Hafizuddin Ahmad Khan (ruler from 1763 to 1790) and his son and successor Nizamuddin Khan (ruler from 1790 to 1799) sent their ships to the Middle East and, sometimes, freighted them to other merchants, such as the Portuguese Resident.¹⁸ Finally, one of the

¹³ He appears as attorney to Shaloom Cohain, a merchant active on the Middle East route, and as agent of the nephew of the Imam of Mascat, freighting on his behalf Ruttonji Manokji's ketch 'Mary', for a voyage to the Middle East and Africa. FRS, 11 November and 31 December 1795.

¹⁴ So, for example, in 1795, the incumbent English Chief, pointed out that 'the chief part of the trade to the Gulph of Mocha [was] carried out by these Borahs [sic], who are numerous and rich'. FRS, 13 August 1795.

¹⁵ On the origins of the Chellabis see FRS, 11 June 1796 (extract of a letter of the Chief and Council of Surat to the Governor and Council of Bombay, dated 28th February 1764). See, also Mohd. Afzal Khan, 'The Chalebi Merchants at Surat, 16th-18th Centuries', in *Indian History Congress*, 40th session, A.P. University, Waltair, 1979, pp. 408 ff.; and Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁶ Like Maohmed and Haji Ali Chellabi who, in 1759, shipped in partnership goods for the value of Rs. 10,000 on the East India Company ship 'Harcourt', bound to the Middle East. FRS, 25 December 1759.

¹⁷ For the commercial dealings, disguised as exchanges of gifts, which occurred in the 1750s between two Surat Nawabs and the Prince of Sind, see Public Prs, 15 October 1760.

¹⁸ For a reference to the Nawab freighting one of his ships to the Portuguese Resident, see FRS, 7 November 1788. For references to the voyages of the Nawab's ships see, for example, the alphabetical indexes of the FRSs for the years 1788, 1789, 1793, 1794, 1799, 1800, under

Nawab's slaves and a main *darbar* officer, Sidi Mufta, besides being the manager of Nawab Nizamuddin Khan's trading ventures, was himself a shipping merchant, as he appears to have been the co-owner of Tahar Chellabi's ships.¹⁹

Besides these two main communities, Parsis, Armenians and Jews were also represented amongst the Surat merchants. The Jews were very few and, on the whole, uninfluential. But the situation of the Parsis and the Armenians was different. Both communities, although small, played a role quite out of proportion with their numbers. In particular, the Parsis were possibly the wealthiest trading community of the city in the 1760s and 1770s.²⁰ They appear to have been sharply divided as far as religious questions were concerned, so much so that the religious quarrels which tore the community apart in the 1760s and 1770s caused actual bloodshed.²¹ Besides religious, commercial rivalries appear to have criss-crossed the community, preventing any kind of internal solidarity. In contrast, the Surat Armenians seem to have been tightly bound by their religious and cultural ties. They kept a low profile and led a quiet life unperturbed by internal religious quarrels or commercial disputes.

The Trading World of Surat

We can now look at the Surat merchant class from another angle by discussing briefly the business activities of the city merchants during the dual government era. At the cost of slight oversimplification, these activities can be classified into three main sectors: overseas trade, procurement and, last but certainly not least, banking.

As far as overseas trade is concerned, it can be pointed out that, in the years 1759 to 1800, whereas some of the trade routes linking Surat to the rest of the world were dominated by Europeans, the Indian merchants played a conspicuous role on a number of old and new routes. Either as shipowners or—more often—as traders carrying their own wares on both Indian and European-owned ships, the Suratis were active along the routes to the Near East, East Africa, Bengal, Siam, Malacca, Batavia, and China. The most important of these routes remained the one to the Near East or, as it used to be called, the 'Gulphs', namely the Red Sea and the Arabic/

the heading 'shipping'. For the frequent voyages of the Bakshi's ketch—several in one year, from which it can be inferred that she was active in coastal trade only—see, for example, FRS, 13 February, 9 September, 23 October, 17 November, 23 December 1787.

¹⁹ On Sidi Mufta as a principal officer of the *darbar*, see PR XVII, pp. 309, 310, 393, 488, 493–494, 499. On Sidi Mufta as co-owner of Tahar Chellabi's ships, see FRS, 1 July 1796 (Chief's minute, paras. 12 and 20).

²⁰ Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Surat during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: What Kind of Social Order?', *op.cit.*, pp. 691–693.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 708, fn. 108.

Persian Gulf.²² The route to China also acquired a growing importance, especially beginning with the 1780s.²³ Finally, the route connecting Surat to Bengal, although experiencing increasing difficulties, played a vital role in the economy of the city.²⁴

The second important branch of activity of the Surat merchants was procurement, namely fetching the products of the hinterland to Surat, which were partly consumed in the city and partly re-exported. In the period of this study, the Surat hinterland extended well beyond the sphere of English political influence, including Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh and parts of the Deccan.²⁵ As a rule, traders working in the procurement sector were organised into a chain of intermediaries connecting the primary producers to both individual and corporate merchants (namely the European Companies) who carried out long-distance trade. The persons at the apex of this chain belonged to the top echelon of the Surat merchant class and were themselves big merchants in their own right and/or important bankers. They managed the 'Europe investment' for the East India Company—namely the procurement of textile manufactures which the 'Hon'ble Company' sold in Europe—and procured its cotton 'investment'. Also, they procured the 'investments' of the Dutch Company, the French and Portuguese Representatives, and some private European merchants belonging to these nations. It may be hypothesised that the most important Indian merchants who specialised in long-distance trade—such as Saleh Chellabi and Mulla Fakharuddin—procured their wares through these brokers. For the sake of simplicity, we can call the latter 'contractors'—as the English did with those in charge of procuring the 'Europe investment' or the cotton 'investment'. The contractors subdivided the task of procurement amongst their lesser brethren, whom—again following English usage—we will call 'under-contractors or sub-contractors'. Whereas a minority of the under-contractors were themselves men of standing—from whose ranks could hail

²² Still, in the last decade of the eighteenth century the annual turnover of the trade to the 'Gulphs' varied between 18 and 24 lakhs of rupees. The higher estimate is based on Walter Ewer's report of 1797 in IOR: Home Miscellaneous 438, p. 49; the lower is based on Edward Galley's report dated 17 June 1800, in PR XVII, pp. 247–275.

²³ Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India 1784–1806*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 128–129.

²⁴ FRS, 2 August 1790. For a full discussion of this point, see Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies*, forthcoming.

²⁵ A good way of exploring the dimensions of the hinterland of Surat is by referring to the fairly frequent data concerning the area of procurement of those textile goods which the East India Company bought in Surat in order to sell in Europe (namely the so-called Europe investment). See, for example, FRS, 17 July 1760; 23 August and 20 September 1774; Public Prs. 8 October 1777; FRS, 1 April 1780; 15 April 1792; 1 August 1797; 21 December 1797. See, also, for the catching area of the 'investment' of the Dutch Company, Commercial Prs. 18 March 1794.

future contractors—, most of them were small operators of limited personal wealth.²⁶

The third branch of economic activity managed by the Surat merchant class was banking. In Surat, whoever had money, even in small amounts, dabbled in money-lending. However, the really important money transactions were in the hands of wealthy merchants. Those among them who made the business of managing money their main or sole line of economic enterprise were called *shroffs*. Wealthy *shroffs* and, more rarely, major merchants gave and discounted bills of exchange, often for sums which could reach lakhs of rupees. Also, the *shroffs* accepted for deposit, sometimes paying interest, funds belonging to both commoners and magnates, both Indians—sometimes residing in other parts of Western India—and Europeans. Finally, of course, both major merchants and *shroffs* lent money to common citizens, wealthy European and Indian merchants, and, last but not least, to the East India Company itself.²⁷

Surat Merchants and Overseas Trade

We can start our discussion of the ethnic composition of the Surat trade by analysing the long-distance trade. For the sake of simplicity we will select three among the important routes relating Surat to overseas markets, which were dominated by indigenous merchants. We have already noted that, during the dual government era, the trade to the 'Gulphs' was the most profitable branch of long-distance trade.²⁸ The continuing importance of the Middle East connection is shown, among other things, by the fact that, even at the end of the century, the Surat weavers, 'by the irresistible effect of old customs', made use of the two best months of the weaving season, namely February and March, exclusively to produce piece goods to be exported to the 'Gulphs'.²⁹ Not surprisingly, the English, soon after establishing their overlordship over the city, imposed control on that branch of trade. The English Chief, whose profits were shared with the Bombay Governor and the English Agent in Basra, reserved for himself either the right to send his ships to the 'Gulphs' or to sell this right on a

²⁶ The best description of the procurement system was given by the Committee of enquiry on the causes of the failure of the 1791 investment. See *Commercial Prs*, 18 March 1794. An example of an under-contractor who went on to be an influential contractor is that of Eddulji Dadaji. In 1759 he was still a sub-contractor. See *FRS*, 3 January 1759. Then, for most of the 1760s and 1770s, he and his partner Dadabhai Manokji were, almost uninterruptedly, in charge of procuring the 'Europe investment'.

²⁷ Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order', *The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century*, *op. cit.*

²⁸ See fn. 22.

²⁹ *IOR: Board Collection*, Vol. 21 (1797–1798):extract of a public letter from Bombay, dated 18 December 1796, para. 327.

yearly basis to one of the main Surat merchants.³⁰ This system—which, apart from everything else, was managed in a capricious way which heightened its unfairness—could not but be resisted by a conspicuous part of the Surat merchant class. Under the leadership of the Chellabis, this group engaged in a political struggle, bound to continue for the best part of the Dual Government era, against what came to be known as the ‘monopoly’ on the trade to the ‘Gulphs’. During this struggle, the Surat merchant class split down the middle, as the ‘monopoly’ did not impose similar restrictions on all indigenous merchants.³¹ A by-product of this situation was the presentation of a series of petitions for or against the English ‘monopoly’, signed by Surat merchants trading to the ‘Gulphs’. To the signatories of these petitions, I have added several names of big and small shipowners, merchants, and *nakhudas* who appear in the English records as belonging to either Suratis or Asian ethnic groups residing in Surat (namely Arabs, Armenians and Jews). Besides, I have included a Portuguese name—which could belong to either a Portuguese or a Christian Indian hailing from the *Estado da India*—as it appears among the signatures appended to a petition presented by Indian merchants to the English.

I have put together 328 names and broken them down in the following table according to their ethnic affiliation.

Table I
Surat Operators Active on the Route to the ‘Gulphs’ 1759–1800

<i>Muslims/Arabs</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Parsis</i>	<i>Armenians</i>	<i>Jews</i>	<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>Total</i>
224	56	28	11	8	1	328
68.3%	17.0%	8.5%	3.4%	2.4%	0.3%	100

Source: see Appendix I

Of course, the above figures represent an imperfect indicator which has to be accepted *faut de mieux*. Its main shortcoming is the fact that it gives the same statistical weight to such merchant princes as Saleh Chellabi and Danjishaw Manjishaw who could freight whole ships with their goods, and such ‘pedlars’ as Girardar Lal Golabhai and Alachanddas Laldas, who, in 1759, freighted wares for Rs. 2,500 and 1,000 respectively, on the East

³⁰ For an introductory treatment of the English ‘monopoly’, see Michelguglielmo Torri, ‘In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class During the Dyarchic Era (1759–1800)’, *op. cit.*, pp. 271 ff. Additional information can be gathered from the petition presented by Mulla Fakharuddin and other Surat merchants in Public Prs, 18 September 1770, and from the Case between Daniel Draper and Mulla Fakharuddin in Mayor’s Court Prs, 4 March 1773 (IOR: P/417/28, p. 149 ff.).

³¹ Michelguglielmo Torri, ‘In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class During the Dyarchic Era (1759–1800)’, *op. cit.*, pp. 271–275.

India Company ship 'Harcourt', bound for Mocha.³² Here we have to bear in mind that, although there were Hindu shipowners, no member of that community ever emerged as a major shipowning magnate trading to the 'Gulphs'. On the contrary, during the 1759–1774 period, by far the most important and wealthiest merchants trading to the Near East were Muslims such as Saleh Chellabi, Ibrahim Chellabi and Mulla Fakharuddin, and Parsis such as Danjishaw Manjishaw and Dadabhai Manokji. The years 1775 to 1782 marked a period of crises, brought about by war and prevailing climate, which badly shook the fortunes of the Surat merchants trading to the Middle East.³³ During that period many of the major shipowners active in that sector either dropped out of the picture—as in the cases of Danjishaw Manjishaw and Dadabhai Manokji—or appeared to be in trouble, as in the case of Mulla Fakharuddin. However, during the 1780s, other shipowning merchants appeared on the scene. As a result, the relative importance of the Muslims among the major shipowners trading to the 'Gulphs' actually increased, as the most important shipping merchants active in that line of trade were Muslims. Saleh Chellabi continued to be the most active amongst them, up to his death in the early 1790s, and his heir, Tahar Chellabi followed in Saleh's footsteps.³⁴ Also, as we have already recalled, in the 1780s and 1790s, such Muslim magnates as the ruling Nawabs and Sidi Mufta played an important role in the same business.³⁵ Finally, in the same period, Mulla Valiuddin, one of Mulla Fakharuddin's two sons, took up his father's role.³⁶ The only exception to this dominance on the part of the Muslims was the presence in this line of trade of an Armenian merchant prince, Agah Owenjohn Jacob Gerakh, who sent wares worth lakhs of rupees to Basra.³⁷ All this suggests that our figures under-represent the Muslims and, as far as the period prior to 1775 is concerned, also the Parsis.³⁸

³² On Girardar and Alachandgas see FRS, 21 and 25 December 1759, respectively.

³³ On the havoc wrought on Surat by the great storms of 1775 and 1782 and the concomitant Maratha raids, see Michelguglielmo Torri, 'In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class During the Dyarchic Era (1759–1800)', *op. cit.*, pp. 285–286.

³⁴ See the heading 'shipping' in the indexes of the FRS, from 1786—when it began to appear—up to 1800. See also, FRS, 2 April 1780; 8 February 1781; 11 and 18 September 1787; 3 April and 10 September 1788; 30 March 1794; 11 April and 1 July 1796 (Chief's minute, para. 12).

³⁵ FRS, 1 July 1796 (Chief's minute, paras. 12 & 14).

³⁶ He appears as competing with Tahar Chellabi and the Nawab on the Middle East route. FRS, 1 July 1796 (Chief's minute, paras. 12, 13). For other references to his ships plying between Surat and the Middle East, see, for example, FRS, 16 September 1790, 18 March 1793, 8 September 1796, where sometimes they are indicated as Mulla Fakharuddin's ships. In fact, Mulla Fakharuddin died in 1787.

³⁷ Mesroby Jacob Seth, *Armenians in India*, Calcutta, 1983 (first published in London by the author in 1914), pp. 249–250. I would like to stress the importance of this book, largely based on rare primary sources collected by Seth, who was himself an Armenian and a descendant of an Armenian merchant active in Surat in the second half of the eighteenth century.

³⁸ The above data should put to rest the claim that the Hindus had the 'control of the bullion inflow from the Gulfs'. See Lakshmi Subramaniam, 'Capital and crowd in a Declining

-Admittedly, the trade to the Middle East was not the only valuable branch in the long-distance trade. More than one author has pointed out the growing importance of the trade in cotton from the West Coast of India to China in the period beginning with the 1780s.³⁹ According to one of these authors, the main beneficiaries in Surat from the cotton boom of the 1780s and 1790s were the Hindu merchants.⁴⁰ However, the available data in the English records concerning the Surat-China trade—data which, admittedly, are much scantier than those related to the trade to the 'Gulphs'—do not appear to warrant any such claim. In fact, I have discovered just a single reference to a Surat Hindu trading to China.⁴¹ This unique case is to be seen in a context of intense trading exchanges which began well before the cotton boom.⁴² In the 1770s, the two most conspicuous Surat shipowning merchants of that time, namely the Parsi Danjishaw Manjishaw and the Muslim Saleh Chellabi sent their ships to China.⁴³ In the 1780s, two other Parsi shipowners appeared active on the same route. One was Manokji Pestonji, owner of the ship 'Sultan'; the other, Nazershaw Ruttonjishaw, son of Danjishaw's brother, who sent his ship 'Dadabhoy' to China, after freighting her to a group of merchants, most of whom were Armenians.⁴⁴

Asian Port City: The Anglo-Bania Order and the Surat Riots of 1795', *Modern Asian Studies*, 19, 2, 1985, p. 213.

³⁹ For example, E.H. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800*, Research Studies of the State College of Washington, VI (1936), pp. 145, 175; C.H. Philips, *The East India Company (1784-1834)*, Calcutta, 1961, p. 244; Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India (1784-1806)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129; J. Kumar, *Indo-Chinese Trade 1793-1833*, Bombay, 1974, pp. 6, 38-39; Subramaniam, *Ibid.*, p. 209 and fn.13.

⁴⁰ Subramaniam, *Ibid.*, pp. 209, 217.

⁴¹ This single reference is to be found in a petition from the Armenian merchant Stephen Joseph, in FRS, 20 March 1786, where a 'Teram Lalldass' is indicated as a Surat merchant under English protection who, as Stephen Joseph himself, had carried wares from China on a Portuguese ship and was desirous to transfer them to an English ship bound to the Red Sea.

⁴² Already in the 1730s, the Surat-China route represented an important trading connection. At the time, its relevance was related to the import of Chinese sugar to Surat. Indrani Ray, 'European Traders in Surat (1730-1750)', *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, 6, 1, 1981, p. 25. On his part, Niebhur, during his passage to the city in 1764, remarked on the fact that the Surat merchants sent their vessels 'même jusq'en Chine'. C. Niebhur, *Voyage en Arabie et en d'autres pays circonvoisins*, Tome second, Amsterdam/Utrecht, 1780, p. 43.

⁴³ In 1772, Danjishaw sent his ship 'Fattee Shyee' to China, as can be inferred by piecing together the data related to either Danjishaw or the 'Fattee Shyee' included in Public Prs, 11, 23 and 24 May 1772. Again, in the Bombay records for 1773, the arrival from Canton of the ship 'Futty Shaw', belonging to Danjishaw is indicated. See Public Prs, 13 February 1773. Of course, it is probable that the 'Fattee Shyee' and the 'Futty Shaw' were the same ship. On his part, Saleh Chellabi sent to Canton the ship 'Istambole' in 1774. This voyage and the ownership of the 'Istambole' are shown by the related data in Public Prs, 12 June and 27 July 1774.

⁴⁴ For the 'Dadabhoy', see Mayor's Court Prs, Cross-bill: Charles Brittan against Nazershaw Ruttonjeeshaw, 25 and 30 March 1792; for the 'Sultan'; *ibid.*, (September-December 1790), James Callendar against Monakjee Pestonjee (IOR, P/418/1, pp. 2289 ff., and, especially, pp. 2290, 2291).

Armenian merchants appear several times in the English records as trafficking in cotton, piece goods and pearls on the Surat–China route, usually freighting their wares on ships belonging to non-Armenians.⁴⁵ But the most conspicuous operator on the Surat–China route was, undoubtedly, Saleh Chellabi who, up to early 1790s when he died, routinely sent his ships to China.⁴⁶ We are fortunate enough to know the nature and the ownership of the cargo of one of his China-bound ships, the 'Faze Allum'. In 1789, she set sail to China carrying a cargo entirely owned by Chellabi himself and made up of 704 bales of cotton valued at Rs. 28, 160 and four bales of *dhotis*. Soon after her departure from Surat, the 'Faze Allum' developed some problems and had to dock at Bombay harbour for repairs. Chellabi took this opportunity to have his cotton cargo rearranged and compressed in such a way to be able to put on board, 423 additional bales of cotton, belonging to another unidentified merchant. In order to do that, Chellabi left behind the four bales of *dhotis*.⁴⁷

A third branch of overseas trade important to the economy of the city was the Surat–Bengal trade.⁴⁸ Most of the trade from and to Bengal seems to have been carried on English-owned ships. However, this does not mean that the Surati-owned ships did not take part in the Surat–Bengal run. Of course, Saleh Chellabi's vessels were active on this route. So were those owned by the Parsi merchant Danjishaw Manjishaw, the Bohra merchant Mulla Fakharuddin, his son Valiuddin, and the Armenian merchant Kojah Phanoes Agabob.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ FRS, 28 March 1782 (petition from seven Armenian merchants) and 16 May 1782 (letter from Mr. Sluysken); letter from Agah Owenjohn Jacob to the Armenian Archbishop of Julfa, 28 April 1783, in Seth, *Armenians in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 248; FRS, 20 March 1786 (petition from Stephen Joseph Armenian).

⁴⁶ Besides the relevant source quoted in fn. 43, see Public Prs 28 June 1778, together with FRS 1790 (shipping); FRS 28 February 1788; Revenue Prs, 27 November 1789; FRS, 14 March and 22 April 1790; FRS, 1793 (shipping).

⁴⁷ For the whole episode, see Revenue Prs, 27 November 1789. From the context it appears that Chellabi was not on board the 'Faze Allum', but we do know that he had at least two representatives in Bombay, his relative Haji Essoof Saleh Chellabi and the Armenian shipping merchant Phanoes Agabob, himself a Surati. My guess is that Saleh acted through one of them.

⁴⁸ The existence of the Surat–Bengal route and the kind of trade which it supported, played a vital role in making it possible for the Surat bankers to discount the huge bills of exchange through which the Bengal Government re-financed the deficits of the Bombay Government. See Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ As a rule, the ships active on the Surat–Bengal route called at the Bombay harbour; see FRS, 2 August 1790 (documentation presented by John Spencer, Appendixes 6 and 10). This explains why much data on this topic are to be found in the Public Prs. For examples of ships belonging to Danjishaw, plying between Surat and Bengal, see Public Prs, 28 March and 17 July 1773, 9 November 1773, 3 June 1774, and Mayor's Court Prs, 6 September 1784, Nicholas Downford contra Dunjeeshaw Munjeeshaw. For examples of ships belonging to Saleh Chellabi, see Public Prs, 11 September 1773, 12 June 1774, and FRS, 1791 (shipping).

The larger part of the trade from Bengal paid custom at the Furza, one of the two Mughal custom houses in Surat. We have two sets of data for the years 1764–65 to 1789–90, which enable identification of the ethnicity of the traders clearing their Bengal wares at the Furza. These data indicate that only three ethnic groups—Armenians, Hindus and Muslims—imported goods from Bengal at the Furza. Whereas it is clear that the trade carried on by the Muslims was the least conspicuous, our evidence is far from transparent as to the exact value of the goods imported by the different groups. This ensues from the fact that we have two conflicting sets of figures; the first gives the number of bales of raw silk and piece goods imported by Armenians, Hindus and Muslims, whereas the second gives the amount of customs paid by merchants belonging to the three communities. Now, according to these figures, the Armenians imported 51.8 per cent of the bales, the Hindus 42.4 per cent, the Muslims 5.8 per cent. But, from the custom duties paid by the three groups, it appears that, value-wise, the Armenians imported 15.2 per cent only of the goods, against 76.3 per cent imported by the Hindus and 8.4 per cent by the Muslims.⁵⁰ The discrepancy under discussion was already noticed and judged suspicious by the incumbent Latty Master, John Spencer Jr., soon after those figures were first produced in 1790.⁵¹ The fact is that the custom revenues from which we have figured out the value of the imported goods, although exacted at the Mughal custom house by Mughal officers, had to be integrally paid off to the English. Knowing the working of the Surat custom houses,⁵² one can imagine that the Armenians, who were a very small number of people—

For ships belonging to Mulla Fakharuddin and Mulla Valiuddin, see Public Prs, 13 April 1774 and FRS, 1791 (shipping). For a ship belonging to Kojah Phanoes Agabob, see FRS, 2 August 1790 (John Spencer's letter of 31 July 1790; IOR, G/36/68, p. 411). The fact that we quote Saleh Chellabi, Mulla Fakharuddin, Mulla Valiuddin, and Phanoes Agabob only, as Surat shipowning merchants active on the Surat–Bengal route, does not necessarily mean that they were the only Surat shipowners engaged in this line of business. With the exception of the Public Prs for the early 1770s, the English records are lacking as far as data related to shipping and shipowning are concerned. So, for example, it is only through a casual remark in the above quoted letter by John Spencer Jr. that we learn that Kojah Phanoes Agabob was a shipowner, and that he was active along the Surat–Bengal route. Again, it is only through the documentation collected by Mesrobian Jacob Seth (*Armenians in India*, *op. cit.*, pp. 248–253) and made up of private papers of Armenian merchants, then in possession of the author, that we know that Agah Owenjohn Jacob, Agah Marooth and Johannes Seth were shipowning merchants active in Surat in the 1780s and 1790s.

⁵⁰ FRS, 6 August 1790 (abstract of Bengal raw silk and piece goods imported at the Phoorza from the year 1764/65 to 1789/90, signed by the Phoorza Master, John Church, and dated 1 August 1790). The value of the imported goods has been calculated from the data included in the above source, according to the modalities indicated in appendix II.

⁵¹ FRS, 7 March 1791 (letter from the Latty Master).

⁵² Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Social Groups and the Redistribution of Commercial Wealth: The Customs Houses of Surat (1759–1800)', *Studies in History*, 1, 1, n.s. 1985, *passim*.

which could make this kind of underhand dealing easier to stipulate—had made a deal with the Nawab and his officers at the Furza, engaging to pay them, in exchange for a more favourable assessment on the goods that they imported at the Furza. All in all, it is clear that no firm conclusion can be reached from such contradictory data. My own guess—and I must stress that it is only a guess—is that the value of the goods imported by the Armenians must have been conspicuously higher than what can be inferred from the customs which they paid; still the Hindus must have been the principal importers. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the discount of bills of exchange sent from Bengal, an activity organically tied to the Surat–Bengal trade, was dominated by Hindu *shroffs* and merchants.⁵³

In the case of the Latty we do not have any comparable set of ethnic-related data. All what we have are some names of Surat merchants under English protection who were active in the Surat–Bengal trade. These names appear in a report written in 1790 by John Spencer Jr., the incumbent Latty Master, where seventeen names are quoted. Seven, with three of them repeated twice, are Armenians; five are Hindus; two are Parsis; two are Bohra Muslims; one is an English lady merchant, Mary Cross.⁵⁴

From Spencer's report it is clear that the names which he was quoting did not make up an exhaustive list. However, the fact that those names were mentioned in preference to others, the emphasis given to seven of them, five Armenians and two Hindus,⁵⁵ and the fact that among these seven names appear those of both the wealthiest Hindu and Armenian in town, Trivadi Urzonji Nathji and Agah Owenjohn Jacob respectively, is a good indicator of the eminence of the individual merchants so selected.⁵⁶

⁵³ See below and Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order : The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ FRS, 2 August 1790 (John Spencer's letter of 31 July 1790); IOR, G/36/68, pp. 402–415; the names are on pp. 410–412.

⁵⁵ Agah Owenjohn Jacob Gerakh, Mackertich Melikhnaezaen, Gaspar Johannes, Phanoes Agabob, Avatick Seth, Trivadi Urzonji Nathji and Tapidas Laldas. FRS, 2 August 1790 (documentation presented by John Spencer); IOR, G/36/68, p. 410.

⁵⁶ When he died in 1795, Agah Owenjohn Jacob left behind an estate worth Rs. 3,50,000, a sum which, on the West Coast of India during the second half of the eighteenth century, represented a truly remarkable wealth. However, Owenjohn's affluence in its halcyon days must have been much greater, as, in the 1780s, it was greatly diminished by the loss of two ships at sea, which caused him a damage of several lakhs of rupees. See Seth, *Armenians in India*, *op. cit.* pp. 249–250, 255–256. On Trivadi, who was the English Company Treasurer and the main banker in Surat, see Saletore, 'Forgotten Gujarati Brahman Banker of 18th Century', *op. cit.* and Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *op. cit.*

Even if we bear in mind the additional warning that Spencer was really concerned with the situation existing in the 1780s, the clues which he gives lend credence to the hypothesis that—with some modifications, namely the absence of Parsis and English people at the Furza—the situation at the Latty was not significantly different from that prevailing at the Mughal custom house. It is of some interest to notice that among the Indian merchants under English protection there were not only Hindus, Parsis and Armenians, but Muslims too.⁵⁷ On the other hand, what is congruent with the situation at the Furza is the fact that, in the 1780s, Hindus and Armenians were the most represented both quantity and quality-wise (as we have seen, in either group appeared the wealthiest member of the respective community). All this, together with the fact that, in the period from 1764–65 to 1789–90, the Bengal goods cleared at the Latty were, at the most favourable evaluation, less than a quarter in value compared to those passed at the Furza,⁵⁸ should make acceptable the proposition that, by and large, the kind of picture emerging from our Furza-related figures is a good indicator of the general situation of the Surat–Bengal trade.

Summing up our discussion on the overseas trade, we can conclude that, in the case of the three most important sea routes connecting Surat to its long-distance markets, the Hindus were prominent and, very possibly, dominant only on the Surat–Bengal route.

Surat Merchants and Marine Insurance

Marine insurance was organically related to the overseas trade and although it should be considered part of banking, the people who supplied it seem to have been merchants active in the overseas trade, and not *shroffs*. In Surat, the maritime insurance business was subdivided into two branches: maritime insurance proper and *respondentia*. Maritime insurance proper was the same kind of insurance that we know today. In other words, either a ship or the goods carried, or both, could be insured by paying a certain sum of money. The second form of maritime insurance, namely *respondentia*, covered only the value of the goods. It consisted of a loan made at the port of departure to the owners of the goods laden on a ship. The maximum amount of the loan was equal to the value of the goods so insured and had to be repaid, at a certain rate of interest, only if the goods arrived safely at their destination.

⁵⁷ Such as a 'Mahomed Essed Allibhoy' and a 'Baderodeen Mahomed Esuf'. IOR, G/36/68, p. 412.

⁵⁸ Compare FRS, 2 August 1790 (abstract of the yearly amount of merchandize imported at the Latty from Bengal), with FRS, 6 August 1790 (abstract of Bengal raw silk and piece goods imported at Phoorza from the year 1764/65 to 1789/90).

Before proceeding, it is important to stress that the data relating to either maritime insurance or *respondentia* are scanty.⁵⁹ This is because most of what we know on this subject comes from English records of judicial disputes. Usually, non-Europeans, when involved in a *respondentia* dispute—or in any other business dispute, for that matter—preferred to devolve its solution to arbitrators chosen by mutual consent. In some particularly thorny cases, the quarrelling parties could decide to turn to the Nawab's justice. However, upon request of one of the two parties, the solution of the case could be referred back to a private person, usually a notable belonging to the merchant community.⁶⁰ Of course, this way of proceeding has hardly left any track in the English records, while the *darbar* records have not survived. On the other hand, English subjects in Surat—namely both English people residing in the city and Surat Indians under English protection—could and did turn to the British system of justice, namely to the Bombay Mayor's Court, whose records have survived. But Indian merchants, even if under English protection, usually feared the whimsical, harsh, and slow 'justice' meted out by the English in Bombay.⁶¹ Accordingly, as a rule, Indian merchants preferred their traditional methods, which, unfortunately for us, means that our evidence is based on a limited number of cases.

All in all, I have been able to piece together only thirteen cases of disputes involving *respondentia* claims and one dealing with marine insurance in which Surat residents are identified.⁶² This evidence suggests that the

⁵⁹ My discussion of *respondentia* and maritime insurance is based on the following sources: Mayor's Court Prs, 16 March 1763 (Gaspard Agazar's petition); 16 April 1764 (the Rev. John Howell... contra Munjeeshaw Dunjeeshaw); 19 November 1764 (the executors of Robert Holford contra Dunjeeshaw Munjeeshaw); 2 January 1770 (petition from Richard Church, Alexander Callendar and James Cheape); 29 January 1770 (letter from the Commissioners at Surat); 8 August 1774 (Nozershaw Ruttonjishaw contra Mulna Fakruddien); 30 July 1766 (Bomonjee Cursetjee for Dadabhoi Monackjee contra Pascual Texeira); 20 March–8 May 1792 (cross-bill between Charles Brittan and Nazershaw Ruttonjeeshaw: IOR, P/418/9, p. 1188); 26 April 1791 (Owan John Jacob contra Johnshaw Ruttonjishaw); 2 July 1793 (Coja Owan John Jacob contra Narrainji Morrojee); 29 January 1796 (Nuzershaw Ruttonjeeshaw against Bomonji Dunjeeshaw); FRS, miscellaneous (Information respecting Surat...; IOR, G/36/119, p. 118); FRS, 19 July 1795; 22 October 1795 (letter from the Chief); Public Prs, 22 November 1770; 16 October 1796.

⁶⁰ See the summing up of the incredibly thorny and protracted judicial dispute between Antoba Sunderji, a Hindu shipowning merchant, and his former *nakhuda*, Malakji Kasimji in Public Prs, 16 October 1796.

⁶¹ For the Suratis' fear of English justice, see John Halsey and Fred Dorrien's letter from Surat of 20 November 1773, included in the Mayor's Court, 21 March 1774, Geogre Perrot contra Mulna Fakruddien. For a brief appraisal of the lack of equity shown by the Court see *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Bombay: Times Press, 1909, vol. II, pp. 217–218. My own negative evaluation is based on the reading of practically all the cases of the years 1759–1800 in which Suratis were involved.

⁶² Listed in fn. 59

Hindus played an unimportant role in this line of business, as is shown by the fact that in only two cases, both related to *respondentia*, a Hindu appears as a lender. In the other cases we have two Parsis, Dadabhai Manokji and Nazershaw Ruttonjishaw, the latter appearing three times, and an Armenian, Agah Owenjohn Jacob—who appears twice as a *respondentia* lender and once as insurer—whereas the balance is made up by Englishmen.

The fact that *respondentia* seems to have been more widespread and widely preferred to maritime insurance proper has several reasons. Besides being an insurance, *respondentia* was a flexible form of short⁶³ or medium term loan which—as it was to be repaid, on the basis of the original agreement between the parties involved, either at the end of the round trip or, more often, at the port of arrival—could perform the additional function of transferring money from one port to another. Moreover, *respondentia* was structured to minimise the risk for the lenders themselves, which, in turn, must have kept *respondentia* rates lower than in the case of maritime insurance proper. This resulted from the fact that—according to the English Chief in 1795—‘by the custom of Surat, the borrower of *respondentia* does not deal with the lender but, executing a number of bonds equal to the amount he wants, he delivers them to a broker, to dispose to whomever he may be able.’⁶⁴ Of course, this system, by making it possible to borrow from several sources at the same time, spread the risk among several *respondentia* lenders.

It is of some interest that all the Indians appearing as *respondentia* lenders—with the possible exception of one of the two Hindus—were ship-owners. This is congruent with the fact that the available data suggest that shipowning merchants routinely lent *respondentia* to their *nakhudas* or captains and to the freighting merchants; hence my hypothesis that the giving of *respondentia* and marine insurance was in the hands of people familiar with shipping. The exception to this rule seems to be the Muslims, as none of them turn up in our admittedly limited sample. This is congruent with the fact that Muslims were reluctant to lend at interest—although, according to a European traveller, the Surat Muslims were less rigid in this matter than Muslims in the Near East.⁶⁵ This leads us to hypothesise that

⁶³ We know a case when Robert Gambier, a Surat Councillor, lent at *respondentia* on an English ship riding at the Surat bar for a period ‘from the 3 of February to the 25 of March 1770, the day the ship will sail.’ Public Prs, 22 November 1770.

⁶⁴ FRS, 22 October 1795 (IOR, G/36/73, pp. 602–603).

⁶⁵ Niebhur, *Voyage en Arabie et en d'autres pays circonvoisins*, *op. cit.* p. 51. It is worth remembering that the theoretically very strict religious prohibition against lending at interest could be circumvented quite easily through a series of techniques expounded in a branch of Sunni theology, aptly called *hyal* (‘subterfuges’ or ‘tricks’). The fact that the *hyal* techniques were or were not used depended on the general consensus in a particular Islamic society at a given time on the legitimacy of making use of them. Not surprisingly, the acceptance of the *hyal* techniques seems to be directly proportional to the stage of development of the capitalist mode of production in a given Islamic society. See Ikram Antaki, *La cultura de los árabes*, México: siglo veintiuno, 1989, pp. 195 ff.

marine insurance and *respondentia* were activities managed by that fairly restricted sector of the Surat trading community made up of non-Muslim shipowners, namely Parsis, Armenians and a few Hindus.

We have noted that, besides the Suratis, the English residents in Surat were active in the *respondentia* activity. In fact, up to 1796, the English Chief was the key man in this line of business. The giving of *respondentia* to the merchants freighting their wares to the 'Gulphs' soon became an integral part of the Chief's right of 'monopoly' on the trade to the Near East. Merchants reluctant to borrow *respondentia* from the Chief or his friends were simply barred from making use of the ships going to the 'Gulphs'. Even after 1775, when some of the more iniquitous features of the 'monopoly' were abolished, the Chief continued to wield control of the *respondentia* business on the goods freighted to the Middle East. On the eve of the enactment of the 1796 regulations—which barred the Surat Chief from any commercial activity, except on behalf of the Company—the lending of *respondentia* on goods sent to the 'Gulphs' was the source of a net yearly income nearing the handsome sum of Rs. 19,000.⁶⁶

Contractors and Sub-contractors

Another branch of the Surat trade was the procurement of goods produced in the city and its hinterlands, mainly for the overseas markets. It has already been noted that the large private and corporate merchants themselves were not in direct touch with the primary producers, this being the task of a chain of intermediaries or brokers. Actually this connecting structure can be understood as a two-tiered pyramid, the upper tier of which was made up of a limited number of men who entered into contracts with the large private or corporate merchants, agreeing to supply goods of a specific quality and quantity by a definite time. In turn, these contractors subdivided the task of procuring the goods among a number of smaller operators, whom we shall call—following English usage—sub-contractors. These sub-contractors, who made up the lower tier of the pyramid, were the men who, personally or through their own agents, linked the contractors to the primary producers.

Clearly, even if contractors and sub-contractors could be lumped together under the generic label of brokers, they were very different sociologically. We have already noted that although some principal sub-contractors were men of standing, most of them were small operators of little economic weight.⁶⁷ The case of the contractors was different. When engaged to work

⁶⁶ PR XVIII, p. 10, and FRS, miscellaneous (information from Surat...; IOR/G/119, p. 118).

⁶⁷ See the section on the trading world of Surat and fn. 26.

on behalf of the English Company, or the Dutch Company, or the French Consul, or, during the 1790s, for the Portuguese Resident, the contractors assumed responsibility for the procurement of goods worth lakhs of rupees, namely sums equal or superior to the gross land revenue yearly accruing to the Surat *darbar*. All this meant that the contractors had to be men of conspicuous wealth and organisational abilities who were selected by the English Company—and, we may suppose, by other long-distance corporate or private merchants—because of their assets and skills.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the contractors were themselves among the principal city merchants and many of them appear to have been active on their own account in the long-distance trade.⁶⁹

During the dual government era, the management of the 'Europe investment' of the English East India Company was shared between Parsis and Hindus. The whole period is neatly divided into two parts by a gap of some years, during the first half of the 1780s, when no investment appears to have been farmed out. The first sub-period—which ended with the investment farmed out in the year 1781—and the second sub-period—which began with the contract of the year 1786—are mirror-like. Although some investments were managed by Hindu merchants or mixed Hindu-Parsi partnerships, the Parsis cornered the bulk of the contracts during the first sub-period. The reverse was true during the second sub-period.⁷⁰

Our data relating to the other European investments are scantier. We do not know practically anything of the way in which the French gathered their own exports. However, French trade was always fitful and, on the whole, of limited importance. Quite relevant, on the contrary, was the Dutch investment, and we know that, as a rule, it was managed by mixed groups of Hindu and Parsi merchants.⁷¹ Finally, as far as the Portuguese

⁶⁸ During the whole dual government period, when the English farmed out some twenty investments, there were only two cases in which the choice was made for political reasons. In the first case, Jagannath Laldas was selected because he had been recommended by the Court of Directors for his services at the time of the expedition of 1759. Public Prs, 24 February 1761. In the second case, a mixed Hindu-Parsi group headed by Danjishaw Manjishaw, the Parsi merchant prince, was disqualified in favour of two other Parsi merchants, namely Dadabhai Manokji and Eddulji Dadaji. This was intended as a punishment for Danjishaw, who, for religious reasons, had dared harass Dadabhai, a protégé of Thomas Hodges, the then Governor of Bombay. Public Prs, 4 October 1768. It is worth noticing that, even in these two cases, the ethnic affiliation of the would-be contractors did not play any role whatsoever in the decision of the English.

⁶⁹ Two most remarkable examples are those of Danjishaw Manjishaw and Dadabhai Manokji.

⁷⁰ FRS, Public Prs and Commercial Prs, *passim*.

⁷¹ Much information on the Dutch investment is to be found in the report of the Committee for Dutch Affairs, created by the Surat Board after the takeover of the Dutch Factory in 1781. See FRS, 23 June and 18 July 1781. See also FRS, 15 November 1790 (letter from the Dutch Chief and Council).

investment is concerned, we know that for most of the century it was even less conspicuous than that of the French. However, starting with the 1780s, Portuguese trade in Surat, as elsewhere in Asia, picked up from its previous level of virtual insignificance and became an increasingly important business.⁷² So much so that this new development caused intense worries on the part of the Surat English.⁷³ According to our data, during this period of revival all the contractors for the Portuguese investment were Parsis.⁷⁴

We can now turn our attention to the small operators who made up the lower tier of the pyramidal structure connecting the merchants engaged in long distance trade to the primary producers. Generally, sub-contractors are thought to have been mainly Hindus. However, this assessment does not seem to tally with the content of the relevant sources. So, for example, in 1794, Mayaram Atmaram, who had been a contractor for the 'Europe investments' of 1787, 1789, and 1791, informed the English that, 'agreeable to what [*had*] been the custom and uniform practice of the place', when contracting to supply the investment, he employed 'a number, possibly 300 town merchants of the *Banian*, *Borah* [*sic*] and *Parsi castes*', who acted as sub-contractors.⁷⁵

Further data in the records confirm Mayaram's statement. During the year 1797, the relationship between the Surat Council and its main competitor in the procurement of textile piece goods, namely the Portuguese Resident, had become increasingly strained. This had the effect of the inclusion in the English records of the names of a considerable number of city merchants who worked as undercontractors on behalf of either the English Company, or the Portuguese Resident, or—and there lay the rub—both parties. After discarding the names of the two Parsi merchants who appear to have played the role of contractors for the Portuguese Resident, we are left with 45 names: 26 (58 per cent) Hindus, 13 (29 per cent) Muslims, and 6 (13 per cent) Parsis.⁷⁶

Of course, this sample, based on a limited number of cases, must be treated with caution. Fortunately, besides it, a list of all the sub-contractors involved in procuring the 'Europe investment' is available for the year 1800. This list

⁷² For the reasons behind the Portuguese commercial boom of the 1780s and 1790s, and its subsequent collapse, see the important article by Rudy Bauss, 'A Legacy of British Free Trade Policies: the end of the trade and commerce between India and the Portuguese Empire, 1780–1830', *Calcutta Historical Journal*, 6, 2, 1982.

⁷³ For an introduction to this problem see Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India (1784–1806)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 154–155, 161, 170.

⁷⁴ See, for example, FRS, 23 July 1797 (IOR, G/36/76, p. 317), and 1 August 1797 (IOR G/36/76, p. 348), for the name of the two Parsi merchants in charge of the Portuguese investment in the 1790s. For its value, which was on average between 4 and 5 lakhs of rupees per year, see FRS, 15 November 1797.

⁷⁵ Commercial Prs, 18 March 1794 (IOR, P/414/54, p. 119), [emphasis added].

⁷⁶ FRS, 23 July, 1 August, 25 September, 13 and 19 December 1797 (IOR, G/36/97, pp. 317, 318, 348, 560, 561–562, 563, 564, 797, 847).

includes 179 names plus the indication of two groups of weavers recorded on the basis of the textile which they produced. Because these two groups were in charge of producing only a small amount of goods, they can be overlooked without any substantial damage for the representativity of our sample. Out of the 179 available names, I have been unable to figure out the ethnic affiliation of 3 of them (1.7 per cent). Of the remaining names, 97 are Hindus, 67 are Muslims, and 12 are Parsis. In other words, 54.2 per cent of the names are Hindu, 37.4 per cent Muslim, and 6.7 per cent Parsi.⁷⁷

The above data flatly contradict the generally accepted idea that the sub-contractors were all or mainly Hindus. At this point, we may refer to the city census of 1816, if we assume it to represent a good indicator of the ethnic situation in the 1790s.⁷⁸ Whereas our estimates of the ethnic composition of the sub-contractors indicate the share of the Muslims to be between 29 and 34.7 per cent—the higher figure being more trustworthy—the 1816 census puts the Muslim share of the population at 25 per cent only.⁷⁹ Which means that the Muslims were actually over-represented among the sub-contractors.

The Bankers

I have discussed at length elsewhere the last important economic sector which we should examine, namely banking.⁸⁰ Here, it will suffice to emphasise that the English sources convey the unambiguous impression that this branch of business was largely monopolised by Hindus, even if Parsis, Jews and especially Armenians were active in it. The only caveat is that the English records are mainly focused on the discount of the bills of exchange through which the Bengal Government re-financed the huge deficits of the Bombay Government. Outside this sector, the banking—

⁷⁷ IOR, G/36/80: Surat Commercial Diary and Consultations (1 January 1800 to 30 April 1804): 7 February 1801, pp. 76–78, 82. The names which have resisted my attempt to pinpoint them ethnically are a 'Poonzia Ladah', a 'Batchin Ladah', and an 'Epmaljee Movuwwjee'.

⁷⁸ The census of 1816, the first available census of Surat, was taken when the turn over of the trade was still high and the city had not yet entered its final and catastrophic crisis which, by the mid-1820s, put an end for good to its importance as a trading centre (Michelguglielmo Torri, 'In the Deep Blue Sea: Surat and its Merchant Class during the Dyarchic Era (1759–1800)', *op. cit.*, p. 293 and fns. 116 and 117). All these make it safe to assume that no major changes had occurred in the city population during the two previous decades.

⁷⁹ The data concerning the May 1816 census of Surat are printed in a map of the city (*Reference to the Plan of the City of Surat executed by the officers of the Revenue Survey Department, Goojerat 1817*), kept in the Map Room of the IOR. According to these data, out of a total of 124,406 inhabitants, 82,418 (66.2 per cent) were 'Hindoos of all castes', 31,183 (25 per cent) were 'Moohummeddans', 10,507 (8.4 per cent) were Parsis, 231 (0.2 per cent) were Christians, and 67 (0.05 per cent) were Jews.

⁸⁰ Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *op. cit.*

related data available in the English records are few and far between. This leaves open the possibility that, in different financial areas, Parsis, Armenians, Jews, and even Muslims, could be more prominent than they appear to be in our sources.⁸¹ However, the eminence of the Hindus—grounded as it was on the dominance of such a key economic activity as the discount of the Bengal bills of exchange—appears to be substantial.

Conclusions

Elsewhere I have pointed out that, during the dual government era, there were several instances of both intracommunal infights and intercommunal cooperation.⁸² This was one side of a medal whose other face was the strict interconnection between the main branches of the Surat merchant economy.⁸³ Bankers, shipowning merchants, freighters, *nakhudas*, big contractors and small sub-contractors, be they Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Armenians or Jews, were all part of the same world and were bound to survive or perish together. Within this world—which was the old Mughal world going through its final phase and gradually collapsing under the weight of the rising colonial order—neither class nor community was the main aggregating element but the patron–client vertical connection.⁸⁴

Bearing all this in mind, we can now draw our conclusions. If we look at the picture of the Surat merchant class as a whole, such as it emerges from our analysis, three elements are bound to impress us as markedly different from what are conventionally thought to be the main ethnic features of this class. The first is the fact that the *shroffs*, who played such an important role in banking and are generally thought to have likewise monopolised the *respondentia* business, were, to all purposes, absent from it.⁸⁵ The second unexpected result of the present enquiry is the role played by the Muslims in the contracting business, even if only at the sub-contracting level. As we have seen, the Muslims, far from being absent from that sector—as it has been generally assumed so far—were actually over-represented. Last but not least, the relevance of the role played by such small communities as the

⁸¹ It is through a single and almost casual remark that we learn that the Bakshi—namely that same (Muslim) noble whom we have noticed as active in coastal trading—routinely lent substantial sums of money at interest, both in Surat and in the countryside. FRS, 29 August 1795 (IOR, G/36/73, p. 397). See also, fn. 65.

⁸² Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Surat during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: What Kind of Social Order?', *op. cit.*, pp. 705–709.

⁸³ Michelguglielmo Torri, 'Trapped inside the Colonial Order: The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ As we have seen, even those few Hindus who were active in this line of business were not *shroffs*.

Parsis and the Armenians appears striking.⁸⁶ The Parsis were, according to the census of 1816, between 8 and 9 per cent of the city inhabitants.⁸⁷ Even if it is well possible that, during the 1760s and 1770s, their demographic share was slightly more,⁸⁸ even then, they must have been quite a small part of the Surat population. In spite of that, they were most prominent in long distance trade, the *respondentia* business and contracting. Equally extraordinary was the role played by the Armenians. According to their historian, Mesroby Jacob Seth, the Armenians residing in Surat during the two concluding decades of the eighteenth century were no more and probably less than 400 souls, among whom some 33 individuals were principal merchants.⁸⁹ As we have seen, this small group of businessmen appears to have been extremely active both in all the three branches of long distance trade which we have examined, and in the marine insurance business. Besides, they played a role of some importance in the bills of exchange business.⁹⁰ On the other hand, the Hindu community, which, judging from the 1816 census, made up more than 66 per cent of the city population,⁹¹ was unquestionably dominant in only two interrelated lines of business: banking and the Bengal trade. In all other fields, the Hindu merchants were under-represented in comparison with the demographic weight of their community. Taking into account the whole dual government period, this holds true even in relation to management of the English 'Europe investment'.

⁸⁶ Analogous considerations could be done apropos the Arabs, if they were considered as making up a separate community.

⁸⁷ See fn. 79.

⁸⁸ It is generally assumed that, during the second half of the eighteenth century, there was a massive emigration of Parsis from Surat to Bombay. So, for example, according to Pamela Nightingale (*Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806*), *op. cit.*, p. 22), 'by the 1780s the emigration of Parsi businessmen to Bombay had occurred on such a scale that the centre of trade had swung there from Surat.' However, her statement seems to be based on a single private letter written by an Englishman in 1789. On my part—at least at this stage of my research and from the standpoint of Surat—I have been unable to find any clear cut indication of a massive movement of the Parsis to Bombay.

⁸⁹ Seth, *Armenians in India*, *op. cit.*, pp. fn. 249 and 253.

⁹⁰ For example, Public-Prs, 1 July 1762; FRS, 21 November 1772 and 30 April 1782.

⁹¹ See fns. 78 and 79.

APPENDIX I

The Ethnic Affiliation of the Surat Merchants Trading to the 'Gulphs'

The first of several lists of names of Surat merchants trading to the 'Gulphs', available in the English records, appears in connection with the ship 'Harcourt', belonging to the East India Company. In 1759, the 'Harcourt', on her way to Mocha, was put up for freight in Surat. In spite of the competition of one of Saleh Chellabi's ships, which sailed on her way to the 'Gulphs' with an exceptionally rich cargo, the English did not have too many difficulties in fully loading the 'Harcourt'. The names of the 49 merchants, who freighted their wares there, are given in four separate sub-lists. There are six Hindu names, one Parsi name and 42 Muslim names, including two Chellabis who freighted their wares in partnership. This means that the Hindus made up 12% of the merchants and the Muslims some fraction less than 85%. As the merchants were convinced to take *respondentia* from the 'Hon'ble Company', we know the value of the goods shipped by the individual merchants, or by merchants who acted as partners, as in the above quoted case of the two Chellabis. Value-wise, the trade carried by Hindus amounted to 17.25% of the whole cargo, against the 82% carried by Muslims.⁹²

The second list is made up by six merchants, all of them Muslim; who came back from Mocha to Surat on the English Company ship 'Boscawen', carrying with them 18 bags of gold. The 'Boscawen', which was heading towards Bombay, had been forced to dock at Surat bar. The six merchants, whose final destination was actually Surat, petitioned the Surat Board to let them disembark with their gold, without proceeding to Bombay. This reasonable request was granted.⁹³

The third list is made up of the names of the 59 merchants who, in 1764, took position in favour of the maintenance of the 'monopoly' wielded by the Surat Chief and the Bombay Governor on the trade to the 'Gulphs'. Eight out of these 59 names, namely 13.6 per cent, are Hindu. Forty-seven, namely some fractions of point less than 80 per cent of the names, are Muslim. The balance is made up by one Portuguese and three Armenian names.⁹⁴ It is worth stressing the fact that the large majority of the merchants signing the petition which became the official justification for the English 'monopoly' on the trade to the 'Gulphs' was made up by Muslims.

⁹² FRS, 21, 22, 25, 26 December 1759 (IOR, G/36/45, pp. 139, 140, 141).

⁹³ MA: FRS, 28 September 1762 (the Humble Petition of Shaw Mam'd Abdul Cadir ...).

⁹⁴ MA: FRS, 28 February 1764 (letter to Bombay). This is the same petition which appears in FRS, 11 June 1796 (translation [sic] of a certificate ... [under] the *Cazee's* seal, dated 27 February 1764), which I have seen at the IOR (G/36/74, p. 609). However, in the 1796 version of the petition, the list of the signatories is imperfect and the copy kept at the MA (Surat Factory Diaries, No. 652, p. 151) must be consulted.

The fourth list, which is more or less contemporary to the third, includes the names of the principal shipowning merchants who had dominated the trade to Jiddah and Mocha in the years before the creation of the 'monopoly'.⁹⁵ The list includes five names, all of them Muslim, inclusive of Mulla Fakharuddin and Muhammad and Saleh Chellabi.⁹⁶

The fifth list can be gleaned from a letter written by Chief Daniel Seton in 1796. While describing the situation prevailing during the chiefships of William Andrew Price and Thomas Hodges—namely in the years 1759 to 1774—Seton stated that Price and Hodges, themselves shipowners, when in need of additional ships in order to carry the goods of the Surat merchants to the 'Gulphs', freighted those of 'Mulna, Chillaby, Dunjeeshaw' or Dadaboy Monackjee'.⁹⁷ Of course 'Mulna' was Mulla Fakharuddin and 'Chillaby' was Saleh Chellabi, both of whom were Muslims. The other two persons are easily identifiable with the Parsi merchant princes Danjishaw Manjishaw and Dadabhai Manockji.

A sixth list is available in the testimony of Mulla Fakharuddin during one of his many trials in front of the Bombay Mayor's Court. In giving the names of other merchants who, in 1771, sent ships to the Middle East, Fakharuddin listed four other men besides himself. One, who has not been taken into account in preparing our statistics, was an English officer of the East India Company in Surat. The three remaining people were two Hindus and one Parsi.⁹⁸

A seventh list is made up by the names of 22 merchants who, on 10 March 1796, signed a petition to Daniel Seton asking for permission to freight their wares on as many ships as possible. All the signatories were Muslims.⁹⁹

An eighth list is made up of the signatures of a group of merchants who, in 1796, under the leadership of Tahar Chellabi, protested against the surviving powers of monopoly of the Surat Chief. There are 19 names: two of them are Jewish, the remaining are Muslim.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ The exact year of the establishment of the monopoly is unclear. Certainly, in 1759, immediately after the conquest of the castle, the Surat merchants were able to send their ships to the 'Gulphs' without any impediment. By 1764, the 'monopoly' had already been fully enforced for a time long enough to allow Chellabi's protests to reach London through the good offices of the Sublime Porte and from there to bounce back to Surat. All this means that the third list reflects less the situation in the 1760s than that in the 1750s. However, I have thought it useful to take it into account.

⁹⁶ This list can be found both in Orme O.V. 131, p. 154 (FRS, 28 February 1764) and in FRS, 31 March 1796 (IOR, G/36/74, p. 606).

⁹⁷ FRS, 1 July 1796 (Chief's minute, para. 7); IOR, G/36/75, p. 660.

⁹⁸ Mayor's Court Prs, 22 March 1774 (P/417/31, p. 567).

⁹⁹ FRS, 1 July 1796. The petition, which is dated 10 March 1796, is included in the Chief's minute, para 15.

¹⁰⁰ FRS, 31 March 1796 (translation of a paper written in Persian and addressed to the Governor of Bombay ...); IOR, G/36/74, p. 396.

The ninth list is made up by either the seals or the signatures of a group of merchants disclaiming any responsibility for the petition by Tahar Chellabi and his friends. It includes 40 names. Twenty-five of them are Muslim names including, interestingly enough, a Chellabi. Eight names are Hindu, six are Armenian, and a last one is Parsi.¹⁰¹

The tenth list includes those merchants who, again in 1796, after the abolition of the Chief's surviving monopoly privileges, prompted by the English, 'volunteered' to pay a 2 per cent additional tax on the trade to the 'Gulphs'. There are 75 names: 30 are Hindu, 24 are Muslim, 21 are Parsi.¹⁰²

An eleventh and last list is made up by the names of 31 merchants who, in 1799, called for the abolition of the 2 per cent extra duty. Four names are Jewish, the remaining ones are Muslim.¹⁰³

All in all, these eleven lists include 313 names. However, the names of Saleh Chellabi and Mulla Fakharuddin appear in both the fourth and the fifth lists. Analogously, the names of three minor merchants—two Hindus and a Muslim—appear twice, in different lists, which are not chronologically far apart.¹⁰⁴ I have assumed that these three persons have been counted twice, and have scaled down my total accordingly, bringing it to 308 names. On the other hand, I have assumed that the same name, when appearing in lists which are some forty years apart, belonged to different persons.¹⁰⁵ Then, again, in some cases in which the same name appears twice in the same list, I have assumed that what we have is different merchants with the same name.¹⁰⁶

In order to arrive at the statistics given in the text, an additional operation has been necessary. This has been the research of the names of those individual merchants who, while not appearing in any of the above lists, surface

¹⁰¹ FRS, 28 August 1796 (...letter from a body of merchants of Surat to the Hon'ble Jonathan Duncan...); IOR, G/36/75, pp. 823–824.

¹⁰² FRS, 26 December 1796; IOR, G/36/75, p. 1,022.

¹⁰³ FRS, 25 March 1799 (petition of the merchants trading to Mocha, Judah and Bussorah); IOR, G/36/78, pp. 157–159.

¹⁰⁴ An 'Abraham bin Ahmed bin Zubbur' and an 'Abraham bin Ahmed bin Zubbare' appear in the eighth and eleventh list respectively. A 'Shallum Abubaker' and a 'Shallon Aboobacar' appear in the seventh and ninth list respectively. A 'Lalldas Cursondass' appears in the ninth list, and a 'Lolldass Cussondass' in the tenth.

¹⁰⁵ This is the case of a Mootabhoy Ragboy, who appears in list 1 (year 1759) and list 11 (year 1799) and a Eddulji Dunji (lists 1 of 1759 and 10 of 1796).

¹⁰⁶ So, the name Mootabhoy Ragboy appears twice in the third sub-list of list one, in relation to two different *respondentia* loans. I assume that, had they belonged to the same person, the English would have listed only one name with the total sum of the *respondentia* loan. Another case is that of Goverdun Amboydass, which appears twice, and not consecutively, among the signatories of the petition of 26 December 1796 (list 10). Had the two names been listed consecutively, I would have thought to a mistake on the part of the copyist. As things stand, that seems less probable.

here and there in the English records as those of men active in the trade to the Middle East. In seeking these names, I have included those of *nakhudas*, as we know that, among their privileges, there was that of carrying trade of their own, without paying any freight. On the other hand, I have excluded the names of some merchants and *nakhudas* who, while operating on the Surat–Middle East route, do not seem to have been Surat residents.¹⁰⁷ All in all, I have been able to find the names of twenty merchants, shipowners and *nakhudas*. Eleven of them belong to the Muslim/Arab cluster and include Nawab Mir Hafizuddin Khan, Nawab Nizamuddin Khan, Sidi Mufta, and, last but not least, the Mulla of the Bohras, namely the religious leader of that community. The balance is made up by three Hindu, two Parsi, two Armenian and two Jewish names.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ For examples of Parsi and Arab merchants who were active along the Surat–Middle East route but were not Surat residents, see FRS, 13 April 1789 (petition of Bhinjee Nunjee); FRS, 31 December 1795; and IOR: Home Miscellaneous 474, p. 319.

¹⁰⁸ The names are: (a) Narandas Jagannath (Public Prs, 22 September 1767); (b) Ibrahim Chellabi (for example, Public Prs, 8 September 1773); (c) and (d) Ahmed Ben Abdul Sciad and Shaik Ibrahim Ben Abdul Real (Public Prs, 7 March 1777, but with reference to the year 1776); (e) Kojah Isaac David (FRS, 19 October 1789, extract of goods imported at the Latty... with reference to the years 1777, 1784, 1789); (f) Agah Owenjohn Jacob Gerakh (Owenjohn's letter to the Armenian Archbishop of Julfa, dated 28 April 1783, quoted in Seth, *Armenians in India*, *op. cit.*, Calcutta, 1983, (g) and (h) Stephen Joseph Armenian and Teram Laldas (FRS, 20 March 1786; petition of Stephen Joseph Armenian and letter from the Latty Master); (i) Nawab Mir Hafizuddin Ahmad Khan (for example, FRS, 12 September 1788); (j) Nawab Nizamuddin Khan (for example, FRS, 21 April 1791); (k) Ruttonji Manockji (FRS, 31 December 1795); (l) Shallum Haroon Kohin (FRS, 11 November 1795 and 30 November 1796 [circular note...]); (m) Sidi Mufta (FRS, 1 July 1796 [Chief's minute, para. 20]); (n) and (o) Narrondas Bomonji and Buxah Ali (FRS, 19 September 1797); (p) and (q) Purboram Assaram and Kulmaddin Budraddin (FRS, 20 September 1789); (r), (s) and (t) Illmass Hussein Umran and Hussein Umran (two different persons, in spite of the similarity of their names) and the Mulla of the Bohras (FRS, 18 September 1798 [declaration of Illmass Hussein Umram]).

APPENDIX II

The Ethnic Composition of the Trade from Bengal Paying Duties at the Mughal Custom House 1764-65 To 1789-90

We know, by summing up the figures collected by John Church, the Furza Master, that the total of the customs paid at the Furza by Armenians, Hindus and Muslims during the years 1764-65 to 1789-90 was Rs. 121,429. More precisely, the Armenians paid Rs. 17,212 (14.2 per cent), the Hindus Rs. 94,018 (77.4 per cent), the Muslims Rs. 10,199 (8.4 per cent). These tax receipts were supposed to be as payment of a 1 per cent tax paid per Surat *maund*, plus the regular custom tax on the difference in weight between the Bengal and Surat *maund*, the latter weighting 3 and 1/4 *seers* more per *maund*.¹⁰⁹ I have assumed that the Bengal *maund* was equal to 40 *seers* as, according to the *Hobson-Jobson* was the case in British India. Differently put, this means that the Surat *maund* weighted 8.125 per cent more than the Bengal *maund*, as it is shown by the following equation:

$$40 : 100 = 3.25 : x$$

Also, we know that, during the period under discussion, Armenians, Hindus and Muslims paid different customs at the Furza, namely 4.5 per cent the Armenians, 6 per cent the Hindus, 5.5 per cent the Muslims. Bearing all this in mind, we can now write the following three equations:

$$17,212 = 1/100 a + 4.5/100 (8.125/100 a)$$

$$94,018 = 1/100 h + 6/100 (8.125/100 h)$$

$$10,119 = 1/100 m + 5.5/100 (8.125/100 m)$$

where 'a' is the sum paid as custom by the Armenians; 'h' is the sum paid by the Hindus and 'm' is the sum paid by the Muslims.

The solutions of the above equations are:

$$a = 1,260,375.2 \quad h = 6,320,537.8 \quad m = 699,369.33$$

namely; being 100 equal to a + h + m:

$$a = 15.2\% \quad h = 76.3\% \quad m = 8.4\%$$

¹⁰⁹ FRS, 6 August 1790 (abstract of Bengal raw silk and piece goods imported at the Phoorza from the year 1764-65 to 1789-90 signed by the Phoorza Master, John Church, and dated 1 August 1790).

ABBREVIATIONS

Commercial Prs	Bombay Commercial Proceedings
FRS	Factory Records: Surat
IOR	India Office Records, London
MA	Maharashtra Archives, Elphinstone College, Bombay (this indication is given only in the case of sources not available at the IOR)
Mayor's Court Prs	Proceedings of the Mayor's Court, Bombay
Orme	Robert Orme Collection, IOR
Public Prs	Bombay Public Proceedings
PR XVII	Papers presented to the House of Commons relating to East India Affairs (paper no. 308), in Parliamentary Reports, vol. XVII, 1806.
Revenue Prs	Bombay Revenue Proceedings.

Harappa as a centre of trade and trade routes: A case study of the resource—use, resource—access and lines of communication in the Indus civilization

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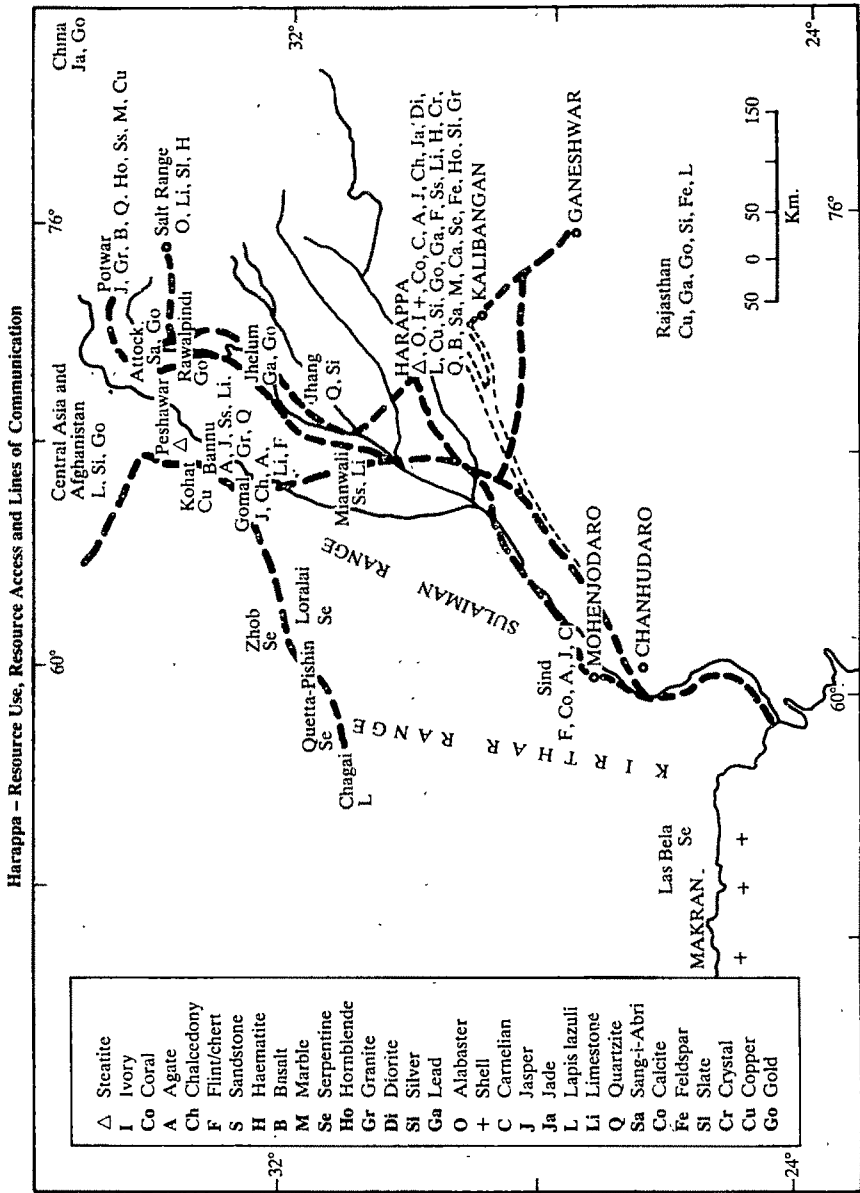
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Scope of the Paper

The paper begins with the resource-potential of the immediate hinterland of Harappa, i.e., the Montgomery district in the Bari doab between the Ravi and the Sutlej in West Punjab. This is followed by a tabulation of the various raw materials or objects made of them found in the course of published excavations at Harappa. An effort is also made to examine, in this context, the extent to which Harappa can be considered a manufacturing centre of various goods. On the third level, an outline of the distribution and availability of these raw materials in different regions which were either within the distribution zone of urban Harappa or with which the latter had cultural links is proposed. In each case, the evidence, if any, of the protohistoric and/or ethnographic use of such raw materials in those regions is considered. We are aware that the resource-location in the context of ancient cultures is dependent on a wide range of scientific 'provenance-studies'. However, the type of detailed enumeration we propose to undertake in the context of Harappa will bring out at least the geographical possibilities of the movement of diverse types of raw materials between various areas. We are of the opinion that this is an archaeologically feasible approach for working out the trade routes or lines of communication of the Indian archaeological cultures. The present paper is an effort to demonstrate the validity and fruitfulness of our methodology in the case of Harappa and partly the Indus civilisation as a whole.¹

¹ N. Lahiri, *The Archaeology of Indian Trade Routes (upto 2nd century BC)*, Ph.D. dissertation to be submitted to the Department of History, Delhi University.

Author's Note: This paper has benefited from comments by Dr. D.K. Chakrabarti and Professor P. Bhatia. I am also grateful to Mr. T.K. Roy for drafting the accompanying map.



Sahiwal Region as the Immediate Hinterland of Harappa

The physical aspect of the Sahiwal region, which is part of the former Montgomery district, has a number of dimensions of which three elements are relevant to understand the spatial location of Harappa, which in its mature urban phase, probably covered a circuit of 3 1/2 miles, and was perhaps the most commanding urban centre of the Punjab plains.² The Ravi today flows about six miles north of the site of Harappa, but the site itself is situated beside the confluence of the two dried-up beds of this river, one of which is clearly shown on the site map.³

First, Harappa was situated in a region which, despite sections of it being inhospitable, traditionally used to support both agriculture and nomadic pastoralism.⁴ This region known as the Bari doab, presents a striking physical contrast between its riverine fringes and the interior uplands. While the inundation of the Ravi and Sutlej rivers along with wells, even before the beginning of large-scale canal irrigation, supported agriculture consisting of wheat, rice, gram, barley, cotton and so on in the alluvial stretches along their banks in the beginning of the present century, the central plateau beyond them was made up of an arid, desertlike upland used primarily for herding cattle, donkeys, horses etc., belonging to scattered nomadic families consisting mainly of the Ravi Jats. In fact, a large number of camels used to be bred there for export to Lahore, Amritsar and Gujranwala. Jungle tracts were found sometimes along the rivers and in some sections of the interior. The most common trees were the *ukhan* (*Tamarix articulata*), *kikar* (*Acacia arabica*), *ber* (*Capparis spinosa*), *karil* (*Capparis aphylla*) and *jhau* (*Tamarix gallica*), along with specimens near Gugaira of 'most trees found in the plains of Upper India'. These jungles must have been much more considerable in the protohistoric period but, even in the nineteenth century context, notices of impenetrable jungles 'impassable alike for man or horse' exist and one is not surprised to note that along with jackals, ravine deer and *neelgai*, tigers used to occasionally haunt the neighbourhood of the Sutlej. Quite clearly, then, physiographic conditions sufficient to support a substantial non-productive urban population at Harappa must have existed in the third millennium BC.

Second, the former Montgomery district was predominantly rural, an aspect which emerges quite clearly from the various census reports. For instance, the 1881 Census noted 1,614 villages with over a thousand of them returning a population of less than 200 inhabitants. There were only two towns, Kamalia and Pak Pattan, and even Montgomery, the head-

² M.S. Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, New Delhi, 1940, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, Volume II, plate I.

⁴ Most of the information on which this section is based is available in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Calcutta, 1890, pp. 492-502.

quarters station, was 'still a mere village' with only 3,178 inhabitants. To locate the mature Indus site of Harappa within this traditional settlement structure is clearly problematic. Whether it is due to a lack of intensive exploration or because of a dense forest cover,⁵ Harappa cannot be archaeologically visualised as being supported by a hinterland of small sites. In its immediate periphery there is only one other reported site—Chak Purbane Syal.⁶ Incidentally, as we go on to the early historic period also, one is aware of a similar settlement pattern in which, Alexander's historians notwithstanding, the Bari doab presented a singularly sparse archaeological landscape.⁷

Third, the Bari doab is minerally barren, saltpetre and *kankar* or calcareous concrete being the only locally available resources. The occurrence of a wide variety of minerals and raw materials in the excavated context at Harappa, contrasts strikingly with this facet of the Bari doab. Harappa was procuring these items from outside the immediate hinterland, and this commerce was indispensable in supporting the city's varied manufacturing and craft activities. An approach to the trade and trade routes of Harappa must mark out this aspect as the crucial area of enquiry.

This trade and commerce was helped by the locational implications of the Bari doab in the context of the general directions of movement which used to traditionally pass through it. Sahiwal falls within the former Multan division of the Punjab which has, over the centuries, acted as a major funnel between the regions to the north and Sind on the one hand, and Rajasthan and other regions to the east on the other. There were, of course, a variety of routes of communication from Sahiwal connecting up with different geographical points. For instance, it was possible to approach the eastern Punjab region along the line followed by the Multan railway into Lahore and through that district into the Indo-Gangetic divide. At the same time, the Sutlej river could be crossed at Pak Pattan, to reach the Cholistan tract through which lay another route going into the Indo-Gangetic divide. However, a study of the lines of communication involves not so much a description of these routes but an exploration of the possibilities of identifying ways in which their varying significance, at different points in time, can be established. Our basic attempt will be to outline the significant lines of communication leading to Harappa, in the light of the resources used at the site and their availability in different regional pockets.

Data on Trade and Interaction

The variety of raw materials—minerals, metals, animal products—that

⁵ M. Fentress, 'From Jhelum to Yamuna: City and Settlement in the Second and Third Millennium BC', in G. Possehl ed., *Harappan Civilization*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 250.

⁶ Vats, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

⁷ D.K. Chakrabarti, *Early Urban Centres in India (An Archaeological Perspective, c. 2500 BC- c. 300 AD)*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Calcutta, 1972, pp. 290–291.

were utilised in the production of diverse artifacts at Harappa is clear from a reading of Chart I.⁸ Briefly, these were steatite, alabaster, ivory, shell, coral, carnelian, agate, jasper, chalcedony, jade, lapis lazuli, copper, silver, gold, lead, chert, sandstone, limestone, yellow Jaisalmer stone, flint, haematite, quartzite, basalt, *sang-i-abri*, marble, calcite, serpentine, feldspar, hornblende, slate and granite.

The Evidence of Manufacture of Finished Products at Harappa

Steatite: Manufacture of steatite seals seems to have been an important craft activity at Harappa. Twenty-three unfinished seals have been found from Mound F and Mound AB: No. 5551, No. 1294, No. 10260, No. 1239, No. 5219, No. 2785, No. 2731, No. 2394, No. 12104, No. 11012, No. 11040, No. 10998, No. 12140, No. 11432, No. 11440, No. 4432, No. 7113, No. 11768, one unfinished black steatite seal and four unfinished rectangular seals of the plano-convex type which are not numbered.⁹ Burnt steatite inlay was also practised at the site; some such fluted specimens were found sticking to miscellaneous broken copper objects in a well in Trench IV, Mound F.¹⁰ Interestingly, a number of gouges made of bronze were recovered in the excavations, which, in the opinion of the excavator, with their semi-circular cutting edges were used for fluting and grooving various kinds of materials, including stone.¹¹ Steatite bead-making at Harappa is represented by one barrel shaped, unfinished steatite bead.¹² A tapering unfinished steatite pendant (No. 4274), grooved at the end, has also been found.¹³

Alabaster: Some inlay pieces of alabaster, lozenge-shaped with incurved sides, have been reported from Harappa.¹⁴

Shell: The marine gastropods, *Turbinella pyrum* and *Fascolaria trapezium*, were commonly used for manufacture, although nothing even remotely similar to the striking evidence of shell working at Mohenjodaro is available here. The evidence for shell working at the site includes some conch shells, five cores, and numerous other fragments weighing about four pounds in Mound F (trench V, stratum II, trench I, stratum III).¹⁵ A number of shell details for inlay were also recovered: thirty-eight heart-shaped pieces, three lozenge-shaped, two rectangular, five square, two triangular, one crescent-shaped, one fluted flat piece, six discoid and six bar-shaped.¹⁶

⁸ Vats, *op. cit.*, Chapters I, II, III, IV, V, VIII, XI, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 38, 54, 71, 82, 113, 121, 122, 125, 128, 134, 151, 156, 173, 179.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-73.

Chart I
Distribution of Raw Materials at Harappa

<i>Raw Material</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>
STEATITE	vases, seals, inlays, pendants, figurines, spacers, temple ornaments, finger rings, nose discs, amulet, ear ornament, plummet
ALABASTER	dishes, vases, lids, pestle, palettes, maceheads, lingam, cone, ring bases, pedestals, handle, finger rings, inlay, fluted specimens
SHELL	lingam, animal figurine, pieces, caps, ladles, spindle whorls, beads, temple ornaments, bangles, bracelets, amulets, balls, inlay, cores, fragments, waste
CORAL	piece
IVORY	animal figurine, lingam, bead, temple ornaments, awls, needles, hair pins, rod, comb, balusters, discs, strip, terminal, cones
CARNELIAN	weights, baetyl, beads, ball, marbles, spheroid, necklaces
AGATE	weights, beads, pendant
JASPER	bead, pendants, chessman shaped object
JADE	beads, pendant
LAPIS LAZULI	lingam, pendant, beads
COPPER	macehead, vessels, hasp, adze, blade axe, latches, axes, chisels, cast bars, daggers, spearheads, knives, sickles, saws, scrapers, razors, gouges, lance head, nail parer, toilet set, awl, chopper, needles, pins, rods, bangle, scale, mirror, fish hook, pieces, stylus, terminal, sheets, lumps, tube, beads, ear ornaments, bracelets, finger rings
SILVER	vase, beads, temple ornaments, brooch, bangle, shell-inlaid boss, boss, bezel on copper ring, sheet, hook
GOLD	beads, armlet, forehead ornament, hooks, bands, necklaces, foil, cylinders
LEAD	ring, boss, wire

Inquiry Commission and Sen (1981). Moreover, I will consciously make assumptions that *overstate* foodgrain supply in 1943 and, hence, *underplay* the possibility of a food availability decline. Despite these contrary assumptions, if food availability in 1943 can be shown to be quite a bit less than in 1941, then FAD can no longer be summarily rejected as one of the explainers of the famine.

First, let me discuss an issue of periodisation. Since starvation deaths ended by September–October 1943, a more appropriate period might be the twelve months starting September, prior to the harvesting of the current year's *aus* crop. For a September to August cycle, availability of rice would be:

Winter rice of the previous calendar year + Autumn rice of the previous calendar year + Spring rice of the current calendar year + Net imports during September to August + Seed for September to August + Opening stock of 'old' rice at September, excluding the previous year's winter and autumn rice.

Periodisation is one issue. A more important one relates to the stock estimates that were frequently referred to but never stated by the *Famine Inquiry Commission*. Although the Commission argued that the 'carry-over' of the 'old' rice at the end of 1942 was substantially less than before, it gave no evidence.¹⁹ The stock issue is critical to this article, and the rest of this section is devoted to constructing such data.

Calculating stocks requires estimates of population growth and per capita foodgrain consumption. Regarding population growth, Sen computes an annual rate of growth of population of 0.46 per cent using the 1941 and 1951 Census, and then increases this to 1 per cent. The 1941 Census was very poorly conducted and the data are considered to be unreliable. Instead, it is better to estimate the annual growth rate for undivided Bengal between 1931 and 1951, incorporating the common area and excluding outlying zones. Using this method, the population of West Bengal and East Pakistan (excluding Coochbehar, Tripura and Sylhet) grew from 50.7 million in 1931 to 64.2 million in 1951, at a compound point-to-point growth rate of 1.18 per cent per year.²⁰ With this growth rate and the 1931 base, one can construct a time series of the population.

This brings me to the thorny issue of per capita rice consumption. The colonial government published detailed Famine Relief Codes, which were

¹⁹ *FIC* (1945), p. 77. No data were given or printed. As Afzal Hussain, a member of the Commission wrote, "absolutely no data are available regarding the stock position of rice (or any other food grain)": *Minutes of Dissent*, *ibid.*, p. 179. Sen tackles this problem by constructing moving averages of foodgrain availability, and then showing that stocks thus implied cannot explain the famine in 1943. Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), p. 62.

²⁰ Government of India, *The Census of India, 1931*, 5,2, *The Census of India, 1951*, 6,2, and the Government of Pakistan, *Census of Pakistan, 1951 (East Bengal)*, 3.

well-fed enclaves of Calcutta. When reporters eventually invaded the countryside, they found death and starvation all around, and their ghastly descriptions of the famine at its height were used as evidence to prove that the horrors were 'man-made'. This assertion was undoubtedly strengthened by widespread hoarding, speculation, and an abject failure of the government machinery.

Having established a simple point that an enormous standing crop need not imply adequate current food availability, I now move on to a brief explanation of Sen's methodology.

III: Sen's Approach

The method adopted by Sen (1981) is straightforward and can be stated fairly quickly.

1. Following the *Famine Inquiry Commission*, Sen defines rice availability in a calendar year (t) as $(aman)_{t-1} + (aus)_t + (boro)_t + (\text{net imports})_t - (\text{seed requirements})_t + (\text{opening stock net of the new winter rice})_t$. In doing so, Sen uses the *FIC* figures that incorporated (a) the corrected rice output estimates, and (b) the adjusted trade data.¹⁷
2. To these figures, Sen adds the net import of wheat into Bengal during the period 1938–1943. Together, (1) and (2) give an estimate of overall supply of foodgrain.
3. Using the 1941 and 1951 Census of the western Bengal districts, Sen estimates a population growth rate of 0.46 per cent per year. Since this growth rate reflected famine mortality, Sen increases it to 1 per cent. This allows him to compute per capita foodgrain availability.
4. Since there were no reasonable estimates of stock or the 'carry-over of old rice', Sen uses two and three year moving averages of overall as well as per capita supply.¹⁸ Without moving averages, Sen shows that per capita foodgrain availability in 1943 was 9 per cent higher than in 1941; with two year moving averages, it was 6.25 per cent higher in 1943. Since there was no famine in 1941, Sen concludes that the famine of 1943 had very little to do with a decline in food availability.

IV: A Reconstruction

Throughout this section I shall work with the data set used by the *Famine*

¹⁷ The output of rice was adjusted along the lines recommended by P.C. Mahalanobis. The adjusted trade data were no longer estimates. 'These [were] based on actual registration of receipts and despatches made by Port and Railway authorities', *FIC* (1945), Appendix II, p. 207.

¹⁸ He argues that if there was a build up or depletion of stock, it should show up in the moving average of the year in question. Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), p. 62.

realise that abundant rice fields today only imply a good crop for the future. A record-breaking standing rice crop is not available for immediate food consumption, and a bountiful paddy field is of little consolation to a person dying of starvation. Hunter had made a similar point in his description of the 1770 Bengal famine:

Millions of famished wretches died in the struggle to live through the few intervening weeks that separated them from the harvest, their last gaze being fixed on the densely covered fields that *would ripen only a little too late for them* (W.W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, London, 1872, [emphasis mine]).

Vistas of green rice fields in 1943 can be explained quite simply. When the *aus* crop was ready to be sown in March 1943, the market price of rice was 128 per cent greater than the harvest price of 1942. The price of the substitute crop, jute, increased much less. The huge swing in relative prices led to a massive acreage allocation for autumn paddy. Since 1943 was also a year of good rainfall, the huge marketable surplus in October 1943 was not surprising at all. The 1943 *aman* crop was also a record breaking one for exactly similar reasons.¹⁶ To summarise, corpses among plentiful paddy fields are a horrible reflection of a calamity; but, *per se*, they do not imply death despite abundance of food.

Before concluding this section, one needs to briefly comment on the reporting of the famine by the media. Although the famine started in March 1943, it was not until September that it began to be regularly reported in the national and provincial dailies. In fact, the famine became a news-worthy event only when emaciated destitutes started migrating to the

¹⁶ In a different context, I have estimated of the relative acreage response of autumn rice for 1901–1939. The model incorporated non-linear sowing season rainfall, and was specified as follows:

$$\log(A_t) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(P_{t-1}) + \beta_2 \log(R_t) + \beta_3 R_t + \beta_4 \log(I_t) + \beta_5 \log(A_{t-1}) + u_t$$

Where A = share of area under autumn rice; P: relative price of rice to jute; R: sowing season rainfall, March and April; I: share of irrigated area to net sown area; u: error term. The estimates are:

$$\log(A_t) = 1.875^* + 0.277^* \log(P_{t-1}) + 0.139^* \log(R_t) - 0.024^* R_t + 0.093^* \log(I_t) + 0.536^* \log(A_{t-1})$$

Adjusted R² = 0.787; D.W. = 1.903; h = 0.350 (no autocorrelation); F = 29.10.

* Implies statistical significance of the t-statistic at 5% two-tail.

If we substitute a relative price ratio of 1.94 (the going price of rice in March 1943 deflated by the previous year's harvest price of jute), and the mean values of the other explanatory variables, the estimated share of area under autumn rice ought to be 71.7 per cent, which is 27 per cent greater than the mean share of 56.3 per cent. Hence, the record crop. For details, see O. Goswami, *Industry, trade and peasant society: The jute economy of eastern India, 1900–1947*, New Delhi, forthcoming, Chapter 3.

1943, when a bumper *aus* crop of 1943 started coming into the market, that prices started to fall. Prices eventually stabilised at a reasonable level following the arrival of a record *aman* crop in December 1943.

To recapitulate, there were tidal waves, crop disease and the like—all important ingredients of a 'nature-made' famine. Yet, the universal assertion was that the horrors of 1943 were 'man-made'. Why so? Shorn of superlatives, the phrase 'man-made' could have meant two things. First, the 1943 famine was 'man-made' in that it rapidly worsened due to government negligence, gross administrative failures, and the implementation of wrong policies. This is clearly brought out by the quote from *The Statesman* given earlier. Contemporary observers showed how the provincial and central government blundered at every step, and then concocted disingenuous lies.¹⁴ However, it is important to note that a government systematically making matters worse does not necessarily imply that the famine was started off by man, and not nature.

The other view was that the genesis of the famine was man-made—a sad reflection of rampant, avaricious speculation despite plentiful availability of rice. Those who maintained such a view frequently used stark contrasts to highlight death versus abundance. The most poignant description of this contrast is to be found in the report of a correspondent from the *Times of India*:

A grim but not entirely uncommon spectacle in East Bengal today is to find a *whitened skeleton* in the corner of a field bearing the *richest rice crop* in half a century. (*The Times of India*; November 16, 1943, [emphasis mine].)¹⁵

Such descriptions were indeed true. Thousands died in or close to paddy fields that were to yield a bumper *aus* crop. However, it is necessary to

¹⁴ A classic example was the boat denial policy. Fearful of a Japanese invasion, the Government of Bengal had impounded 66,653 country boats south of a line running from Chandpur (in Tippera) to Kharagpur (in Midnapur)—which virtually stopped all movement of rice from surplus zones such as Bakarganj, Khulna, Chittagong and Midnapore, to the deficit districts of east Bengal. Even in April 1943, when the famine was raging through the countryside, 16,500 boats remained impounded in Bakarganj. See *FIC* (1945), pp. 25–27. Other acts of negligence and mismanagement included a complete failure of the Government to initiate and implement policies that could have released a large supply of food through the public distribution system. On these issues, see *FIC* (1945), Sen, *op. cit.* (1981), pp. 78–83, and Paul R. Greenough, *Prosperity and Misery in Modern Bengal: The Famine of 1943–1944*, New York. Of course, it should be noted that Greenough's description of massive excess demand for rice in certain districts co-existing with excess supply in others can occur with or without an overall decline in food availability.

¹⁵ This image occurs in almost all creative work centred around the famine. In Satyajit Ray's film of Bibhuti Bhushan Bandopadhyay's novel *Ashani Sanket* (Distant Thunder), the dominant colour is green—signifying paddy fields and abundance—amidst which stalks greed, speculation, starvation, and death.

Table 1
Price of Coarse Rice in Calcutta
(Rs. per maund of 82.3 lbs)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Index</i>
1942 Jan	5.63	100
Jul	8.00	142
Oct	8.50	151
1943 Jan	12.31	219
Mar 17	19.38	344
Mar 29	22.00	391
Apr 12	20.44	363
Apr 26	21.00	373
May 10	25.00	444
May 28	31.50	560
Jun 11	34.00	604
Jun 25	31.50	560
Jul 16	32.50	577
Jul 30	33.00	586
Aug 20	37.00	657

Source: *FIC* (1945), p.40, p.218, and Ghosh, *Famines in Bengal, 1770-1943* (Calcutta, 1944) p.44.

increased from Rs. 12.25 to Rs. 31; and in Tippera, prices increased from Rs. 9.50 to Rs. 25 over the same period.⁹ Reports of the district officers outlined the progress of the famine: By November 1942, within a month of the cyclone, the price of rice had risen to Rs. 12 in Mymensingh and Tippera.¹⁰ Within a fortnight it had further increased to Rs. 19, which led to looting in the Netrakona bazaar on November 17. By December there were food riots in Pabna and Sirajganj.¹¹ In February 1943 many peasant households in Rajshahi and Dacca were going without food. By March there were reports of paddy looting in Dinajpur and Rangpur, and starvation deaths had started in Faridpur. In May, Pabna was in the grips of widespread starvation, and Dacca needed food and cash relief. By July, starvation deaths were common spectacles in Dacca, Faridpur, and Pabna, and every upcountry town was swarming with 'thousands of beggars'.¹²

According to Sen, starvation deaths were at their height between March and September-October—a period when prices had already quadrupled.¹³ By August 1943, when excess mortality was the order of the day, prices were ruling at over 6.5 times the January 1942 level. It was only after October

⁹ *FIC* (1945), p. 40.

¹⁰ *The Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta daily, November 1 1942.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8 and 18 November and December 13, 1942.

¹² *FIC* (1945), pp. 226-227.

¹³ Sen calls this Phase II of the famine: Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), p. 55.

It is a high tragedy that in a country like ours, with its abundance of food-stuffs... there should be deaths due to starvation. (Madan Mohan Malaviya in K. C. Ghosh, *Famines in Bengal, 1770-1943*, Calcutta, 1944, p. x.)

This famine is primarily a State industry, and to my mind, in certain of its aspects it bears the hallmark of a genuine British manufacture. (K.C. Neogy in K.C. Ghosh, op. cit., p. 171.)

This sickening catastrophe is man-made.... We say with deliberation that the present Bengal famine constitutes the worst and most reprehensible administrative breakdown in India since the political disorders of 1930-31. (*The Statesman*, 23 September 1943.)

To understand why the phrase 'man-made' dominated all non-governmental discourse on the famine, one needs to begin with an outline of the rice crop cycle in Bengal. There were three major rice crops. By far the most important was winter rice (*aman*), which was sown in June or July, transplanted in September or October, and harvested in November or December. Autumn rice (*aus*) was next in importance. A coarser variety than *aman*, it was sown in March or April, and harvested in August or September. *Boro*, or spring rice, was the marginal crop. Cultivated on scattered riverine beds, it was sown in November and December, and reaped in February or March.

Certain events in 1942 augured poorly for 1943. In March 1943, the Japanese Army captured Rangoon and cut off the export of coarse Burmese rice to Bengal—a staple item for poorer rural households. On October 16, 1942, a massive cyclone swept through the coastal areas of Midnapur and 24 Parganas, followed by three tidal waves that inundated over 3,200 square miles.⁷ In Midnapur, the standing winter rice crop and reserve stocks were totally destroyed. The loss was substantial on two counts. First, *aman* was the most important rice crop and second, Midnapur was the largest rice growing and exporting district of the province. After the deluge came crop disease. The net result was a major shortfall in the *aman* crop. At 6.02 million tons, the 1942 harvest was 32 per cent less than the previous *aman* crop and, more significantly, 19 per cent lower than the previous quinquennial average.⁸ Therefore, by the beginning of 1943, there seemed to be a number of supply-side forces that could have started a food price spiral. Indeed, prices rose dramatically. Table 1 gives the price of coarse rice in Calcutta during the period.

Things were worse in the districts. In Rajshahi the price of rice rose from Rs. 13.50 per *maund* in January 1943 to Rs. 26.31 in May; in Faridpur it

⁷ Government of India, *Famine Inquiry Commission: Report on Bengal*, New Delhi, 1945, p. 32, hereafter *FIC* (1945).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

In general, FAD leads to FEE. But this is only one of the reasons for FEE. The strength of Sen's analysis lies in showing that in many famines FEE had little to do with FAD. Notably, Sen demonstrates that 'the disastrous Bengal famine [of 1943] was not the reflection of a remarkable over-all shortage of foodgrains'.³

FEE cannot be disputed: if a non-food producing agent commands a fixed nominal income or entitlement, and if the price of food increases, *ceteris paribus*, the person's food exchange entitlement falls. If Sen's hypothesis is at all to be debated, it must be in the domain of the data and their interpretation. This paper re-examines the evidence on the Bengal famine of 1943 to analyse the role of FAD. To make the analysis comparable, I have looked at the same data and sources used by Sen (1981). Section II briefly outlines the essential facts of the 1943 famine, and examines why it was called a 'man-made'—not a 'nature-made'—calamity. Section III gives a brief resumé of Sen's method. After outlining an alternative method, I then reconstruct the data in Section IV, and the conclusions that emerge seem to differ from Sen's. Section V concludes the paper.

II: Man-made Famine—Some Questions

The Bengal famine of 1943 was remarkable in terms of its scale as well as popular perception. The famine swept across at least 60 per cent of Bengal's net cultivable area, 'very severely' or 'severely' affecting more than 58 per cent of the rural households.⁴ It caused a 45 per cent increase in the number of rural destitutes in the course of a single year, and reduced more than 486,000 rural families to a state of beggary.⁵ Although the harshest phase of the famine lasted for eight months—March to October 1943—its impact was felt for a much longer period. By the time the effects of the famine had finally petered out, starvation, epidemics and disease had claimed over three million lives.⁶

Another extraordinary feature was an almost unanimous view among the intelligentsia that the famine was due to acts of man, not nature. The following quotes bear this out.

there could be a famine or a situation of acute starvation accompanied by a sharp decline in endowment of a class of people without any perceptible shift in relative prices or the exchange entitlement mapping. I am grateful to Sen for pointing this out to me.

³ Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), p. 63.

⁴ These two somewhat ambiguous terms are from P.C. Mahalanobis, R. Mukherjee and A. Ghosh, 'A sample survey of the after-effects of the Bengal famine of 1943', *Sankhya*, 7, 1946, p. 354.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 357, 362. Destitutes and beggars were defined as homeless people who survived wholly on charity.

⁶ See Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), pp. 195–216, for a critique of earlier mortality figures and his more plausible estimate of three million excess deaths.

The Bengal Famine of 1943: re-examining the data

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I: Introduction

For decades, economists had thought that famines occurred due to the vagaries of nature and because population grew faster than erratic food supply. Thanks to Amartya Sen, especially his book *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, the focus has partly shifted away from an essentially Malthusian perspective to more important distributive issues. In a large measure this is due to Sen's emphasising that starvation and famines are characterised by 'some people not *having* enough food to eat'; there not *being* enough food to go around is a subset of the former—one of the many possible causes.¹

To highlight this distinction, Sen introduces the concept of entitlement failure which consists of two sub-concepts: failure in exchange entitlement (FEE) and food availability decline (FAD). In private ownership market economies, agents have one or more of four basic entitlements: trade based entitlement, production based entitlement, own labour entitlement and inheritance or transfer entitlement. A shrinking initial endowment bundle and/or adverse movements in relative prices reduces entitlement through exchange. When this occurs in a dramatic way, the entitlement or exchange entitlement of a class of people can contract to a point where they are forced to eat less than the required minimum, starve and finally die.²

¹ A.K. Sen, *Poverty and famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*, Oxford, 1981, hereafter referred to as Sen (1981).

² All famines need not be characterised by exchange entitlement failures. Conceivably,

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Finally, the notion of a gateway is causally linked to the secondary postulate of the lack of manufacturing activities at Harappa. Our discussion in this regard shows that the evidence is not as tenuous as it is made out to be. Possibly, this silence on manufacturing at Harappa is part of the lack of consideration that such usages of theoretical models display for the specific context in which a socio-economic phenomenon like trade and trade routes needs to be studied, a context which can be visualised in the case of Harappa even through a thorough reading of the basic excavation report.

In fact, it is being increasingly acknowledged that the appropriation by archaeologists of controlled and conscious abstractions of spatial patterns, such as, 'gateway' or 'central place' theories, developed by geographers needs to be considerably refined if useful information on past social relationships that apparently lie coded in them is to be extracted. For instance, while geographers have regarded central places basically as economic phenomena in which non-economic factors contribute only a small superficial element, settlement archaeology has demonstrated that such complex settlement patterns in the field record are found to be spatially identical whether they were performing economic, or military and administrative functions in relation to their hinterlands.²²⁶ The notion of a 'gateway city' also is an aspect of the mercantilist model in which the development of an urban system is built on the articulation of long distance trade. The representation of Harappa as a gateway city is significantly dependent on the postulation of an external trade orientation and a lack of local specialised manufacture for it, which, in the light of our detailed empirical study of the problem, is clearly untenable. It may possibly be more useful to think of the role of the city of Harappa and its location, in the context of a multi-factor process, in which certain sociopolitical processes, along with economic factors were at work. That exercise, however, is clearly beyond the scope of the present paper.

²²⁶ D. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, London, 1968, fig. 113-115; R. McC. Adams, *Anthropological Perspectives on Ancient Trade*, *Current Anthropology* 5, 1974, pp. 239-258; C. Renfrew, 'Alternative Models of Exchange and Spatial Distribution', in T.K. Earle and J.E. Ericson eds., *Exchange Systems in Prehistory*, New York, 1977, pp. 71-90.

The former Hakra river bed where such sites are concentrated is only separated from Harappa by about 150–200 kilometres.

Secondly, while Harappa's 'greater hinterland of unique and diverse essential raw materials'²²⁴ was clearly significant in the broader perspective of the resource procurement system of the Indus Civilisation, our analysis of the resources available to Mohenjodaro does not validate the theoretical proposition that Harappa transported these resources to it. A detailed elucidation of the contact zone of Mohenjodaro cannot be presented due to constraints of space. Still, in Sind itself, ordinary stone, including flint/chert, semi-precious stones, shell and gypsum were available.²²⁵ Many of the resources that were not available in Sind but were used at Mohenjodaro could have been obtained from Baluchistan, ranging from essential metals like copper to 'luxury' minerals such as turquoise and lapis lazuli. The other raw materials available in Baluchistan, also used at Mohenjodaro, were lead, agate, jasper, serpentine, steatite, haematite, and silajit. This communication axis had also been foreshadowed in the centuries prior to the efflorescence of the Harappan Civilisation not only by the presence of some Baluchi raw materials in Sind but also by the occurrence of Baluchi pottery there, as well as by the presence of Sind pottery in Baluchistan. Moreover, Baluchistan is marked by a definite Harappan presence, including sites like Dabar Kot, Sutkagendor etc. Still, Baluchistan was not the only region with which Mohenjodaro was interacting in the mature Harappan phase and it is most likely that Rajasthan was also providing some raw materials including copper, agate, jasper, steatite, lead, gold, silver, nepheline, feldspar etc. The monumental centre of Harappa could not possibly, keeping the geography of the area in mind, have played any role in articulating Mohenjodaro's procurement of raw materials from either Baluchistan or Rajasthan. There were, admittedly some raw materials that may have been supplied from the northern regions such as Chinese jade, gold, and Afghani silver and lapis lazuli. However, these were 'luxury' items and not 'essential' raw materials.

Thirdly, while none of the resources that Harappa exploited were located in the immediate vicinity, the presence of most of these resources in regions which were often not at great distances from the Bari doab, and, in most cases, were available in regions that displayed contacts with the Harappan Civilisation, invalidates any notion of Harappa having an external trade orientation in its economic management—the detailed outline of the resources available in many of the regions suggests that, for instance, copper need not have been procured from the Kangra and Simla districts which have no known links with Harappa.

²²⁴ Fentress, *op. cit.*, 1982.

²²⁵ For the resources of Sind, Baluchistan and Rajasthan see the discussion on resource availability in this paper. Additional information is available in the various district gazetteers as well as in archaeological reports.

orientation. Harappa, according to Ratnagar, seems to have had precisely such an orientation; (d) the absence of, in Ratnagar's opinion, archaeological data on local manufacture at the site strengthens the possibility of Harappa functioning as a gateway city.

A rereading of *Excavations at Harappa* and other relevant bodies of data, however, makes us reject the 'gateway theory' as a model for analysing Harappa's role in the Indus Civilisation because it fails to take account of many of the basic points at issue. Firstly, our recording of the possible areas from where Harappa was procuring its raw materials demonstrates that this urban centre cannot be usefully visualised within a framework of one primate city and several tributary centres. For instance, if the Derajat and Potwar regions were providing gypsum, jasper, chalcedony, agate, limestone, copper, lead and gold, among other resources to Harappa, the presence of contemporary settlements which have well established pre-Harappan antecedents in the Gomal plain and in the Potwar plateau, and which do not seem to owe their existence to Harappa's needs for such raw materials has to be considered. In fact, the 'consensus calibration' of radio-carbon dates from the late Kot Dijian sites in the Bannu basin, Gomal region and the Potwar plateau suggests that the early Harappan horizon in those regions continued into the Harappan phase.²²²

This permits one to make the inference that Harappa was procuring these raw materials from regions that were clearly not part of the Harappan distribution zone. The Kot Dijian horizon seems to have still been the dominant culture there, the metaphor of 'tributary centres' being used for such sites is, thus, highly questionable. It also needs to be strongly underlined that most of the Kot Dijian sites of the Bannu, Gomal and Potwar regions were using many of these raw materials (that Harappa needed) in an earlier pre-Harappan context and contemporaneous with the Indus civilisation as well. Similarly, the sites of the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture of north Rajasthan which were flourishing in the zone from where Harappa procured copper cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be subsumed within the postulate of tributary centres. Furthermore, if the 'natural' hinterland of Harappa, according to Fentress, included northern Rajasthan, the complex hierarchy of Harappan settlements there and in the adjoining Hakra stretch suggests that the notion of a dendritic settlement pattern in which the lower level centers were tributary to only one higher level center i.e., Harappa cannot be sustained. The Ghaggar-Hakra stretch includes some of the largest Harappan sites including Lurewala, Trekoe, Kudwala and Derawar.²²³ In fact, Lurewala which was 820000 sq. metres in size is almost as spectacular in its spatial dimensions as Harappa which covered 850000 sq. metres.

²²² Thomas and Allchin, *op. cit.*

²²³ D.K. Chakrabarti, 'Size of the Harappan Settlements', in D.P. Agrawal and D.K. Chakrabarti eds., *Essays in Indian Protohistory*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 207.

work of Mercia Fentress.²¹⁷ Clearly, the importance that has been attached by South Asian archaeologists to the regions west of Baluchistan; whether it is the rich sources of copper in Oman or the presence of carnelian in the Persian Gulf, is misplaced. While there may have been raw materials involved in the long distance trade between the Indus valley, the Persian Gulf, Iran and Mesopotamia, we see no reason to argue that Harappa or any other sites of the Indus civilisation were in any way solely or even significantly dependent on the regions to the west for such raw materials.

The paper has also tried to emphasise the point that Harappa, like other contemporary monumental centres of the period such as Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Lothal etc., was a centre where specialised manufacture was undertaken. It has been shown that manufacture of steatite seals and jewellery, alabaster inlay work, shell working, semi-precious beads, weights in agate, sandstone, slate and chert, flint and chert artifact manufacture, and copper/bronze working were undertaken. In some categories, evidence for manufacture is undoubtedly more extensive than in others.

This brings us to the third major implication of the present paper which is that the theoretical constructs used to understand the position of Harappa have failed to take account of these aspects of the site. This is reasonably clear from even a cursory overview of one of the most recent models for understanding the locational significance of Harappa, the notion of the 'gateway city' explored by Shereen Ratnagar,²¹⁸ a construct that is also present in Fentress's²¹⁹ articulation of the role of Harappa in the context of its hinterland and the major Indus centre of Mohenjodaro. The major points in that argument may be summarised: (a) a gateway city is 'part of a settlement system characterised not by centrality and the interstitial placing of sites, but by dendritic networks where lower level centers are tributary to only one higher level.... With primate cities functioning as 'gateways' the networks connecting the settlement points are like elongated fans radiating from the primate city.²²⁰ Fentress's²²¹ analysis is also similar: 'What one actually does find is a dendritic type of pattern which follows the rivers, without much settlement in between. There is evidence of some contact with different cultures in the highlands and resource areas.... Harappa is best viewed in the Indus urban network as the main northern supply center to Mohenjodaro' (b) such settlement points are linked to the gateway city, rather than to each other except along routes; (c) this settlement pattern is especially to be found in regions where the economy has a strong external

²¹⁷ M. Fentress, *Resource Access, Exchange Systems and Regional Interaction in the Indus Valley*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Pennsylvania, 1976.

²¹⁸ S. Ratnagar, 'The Location of Harappa' in G. Possehl ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 261-264.

²¹⁹ M. Fentress, *op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 245-260.

²²⁰ Ratnagar, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

²²¹ Fentress, *op. cit.*, 1982, p. 250.

districts, the core areas of the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture, and the Indus Civilisation sites to the west, which includes Harappa.²¹⁴

Ganeshwar, as a site is ideally suited on the source of one of the streams of the river Kantli which is further fed by other streams from Kanwat-Ther-Khandela, all located in the copper zone of the Shekhawati region.... The river Kantli seems to have been a major river during the pre-Harappan period. Flowing east of Jhunjhunu town, it now dries up near Rajgarh in the Churu district, whereas, in the past, it joined the Drishadvati river somewhere between Nohar and Bhadra in the north, from where there was no difficulty in moving towards Kalibangan which is hardly 50 km.... The Kantli river is, at some places, 2 to 3 km in width and it must have made possible movement from Ganeshwar to Kalibangan and other Indus centres of the west.

It is possible that a land route from Ganeshwar to Sothi-Bhadra via Nim-ka-Thana, Khatri, Chirawa and Rajgarh was also in use in the Harappan period, as Agrawala suggests.²¹⁵ From the Sothi-Bhadra region, the Ghaggar-Hakra tract was followed to go west.

Implications of the Present Study

What does the foregoing analysis of the nature of resource-use, resource-access, and lines of communication of the urban centre of Harappa imply for studies of Harappan trade?

Firstly, if the primary focus of studies of Harappan trade has been on its external ramifications, the present paper hopefully demonstrates that the extant geological and archaeological data provides the space on which the internal resources available to the civilisation can be mapped to exemplify the importance of the internal pattern of trade and trade routes. Our analysis of the possible zones from where Harappa was procuring the range of raw materials that it exploited, and the possible trade routes with reference to these zones is a specific case to the point. Although a comprehensive analysis of the total pattern of the trade routes of the Harappan civilisation has been attempted elsewhere,²¹⁶ the present discussion has sought to highlight the abundance of raw materials available to Harappa within the distribution zone of the civilisation itself or along its peripheries. The centrality of Harappa in terms of the diverse and rich resources of its own geographic region has been also highlighted in the

²¹⁴ R.C. Agrawala, 'Aravalli, the major source of copper for the Indus and Indus related cultures', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.

²¹⁵ Agrawala and Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

²¹⁶ Lahiri, *op. cit.*

The field research programme under the guidance of M.R. Mughal in the Cholistan desert tract of the Bahawalpur region suggests that the main route of communication between the Indus plains and the regions to the east including Rajasthan was through this strip itself.²⁰⁷ The Hakra river, according to Mughal, was perennial in the 4th-3rd millennium BC; the presence of over 172 sites with mature Harappan occupation levels on a stretch of the now dry bed of the river suggests its importance. On the Indian side, at least 28 Harappan sites have been discovered in the Hanu-mangarh-Ganganagar area, most of them clustered along the dry bed of the Ghaggar river.²⁰⁸ Equally significant is the fact that 45.4 per cent of the sites in the Cholistan tract have been typified as 'industrial' sites.²⁰⁹ Many of these industrial sites seem to have been involved in copper smelting; for instance, Siddhanwala Ther, near Fort Derawar, yielded not only a copper ingot but also numerous kilns.²¹⁰

This region then, definitely acted as a conduit to the Rajputana copper belts. The major routes connecting the Indus plains and Rajasthan through Bahawalpur have been delineated in the Rajasthan district gazetteers,²¹¹ and more recently by G.L. Devra.²¹² The Bikaner area, whose copper resources had been almost exhausted by the twentieth century, in the period under study, was providing some copper, especially in the light of its general geographical orientation to the Cholistan tract. Bikaner was connected by two major routes to the Bahawalpur region and Multan. The first route passed from Multan to Bahawalpur-Anupgarh-Mahajan-Lunkaransar-Bikaner from where it went upto Jaipur. This was probably the axis through which Harappa was linked to Bikaner and the regions further south—there were ferry crossings at the Sutlej and the channel of the Ghaggar—Hakra from where Anupgarh was reached. The orientation of the second route was from Multan through Pugal to Bikaner. That Pugal mediated traffic between the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture and Harappa is suggested by the discovery of fragments of copper arrowheads along with some microliths there.²¹³

R.C. Agrawala, on the basis of the landsat imagery of former rivers in this region, suggested the possible route connecting Sikar and Jhunjhunu

²⁰⁷ M.R. Mughal, 'Recent Archaeological Research in the Cholistan Desert', in G.L. Possehl ed., *Ibid.*, pp. 85-96.

²⁰⁸ J.P. Joshi, M. Bala and J. Ram, 'The Indus Civilization: A Reconsideration on the Basis of Distribution Maps', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *op. cit.*, p. 522.

²⁰⁹ Mughal, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ B.D. Agarwal, *op. cit.*; K.K. Sehgal, *Rajasthan District Gazetteers Bikaner*, Jaipur, 1972; K.K. Sehgal, *Rajasthan District Gazetteers Ganganagar*, Jaipur, 1972. These are based on early British records.

²¹² G.L. Devra, *Some Aspects of Socio-Economic History of Rajasthan*, Jodhpur, 1980, pp. 36-45.

²¹³ Agrawala and Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

there were ferries at regular intervals on the Indus river which were controlled by the local boards; the receipts were evenly divided between the two districts which were connected by the ferry. Sometimes, even within one district, ferries were established at a number of points. For instance, in the Sukkur district, the district gazetteer mentions the existence of ferry crossings at Rohri, Pano Akil, Ghotki and Ubauro *talukas*; whose respective rights were sold annually by auction.²⁰³ In fact, Chanhudaro, in the Nawabshah district, seems to have been an important point along which trade from Sind to Punjab and further northwards was mediated. This is evident from the large number of raw materials exploited at the site, and from the large number of specialised manufacturing activities conducted there which, incidentally, covered a larger absolute area at the site than even at Mohenjodaro. From Chanhudaro the route probably followed the banks of the Indus till it reached the Bahawalpur tract, after crossing which, Harappa was reached.

Rajasthan-Harappa

The routes along this line seem to have articulated a relationship of special privilege on account of Rajasthan's enormous mineral resources, especially copper. In fact, contentions about the importance of the communication nexus between Harappa and Rajasthan have centred primarily around the direct and indirect exploitation of the vast copper resources of the latter region; whatever limited metallurgical analysis that has been done on the Khetri copper deposits clearly suggests that Rajasthan copper was being exploited by the monumental centres of the Indus Civilisation.²⁰⁴ Along with copper, some silver, possibly gold and lead as well, and semi-precious stones from Rajasthan were also being procured by Harappa. The Ganeshwar-Jodhpura complex in the Khetri region which included within its ambit a large number of specialised protohistoric copper smelting sites is also significant. In fact, an examination of many of the illustrations of arrowheads of the barbed variety, spearheads and fish hooks, shows a number of general stylistic affinities between Ganeshwar copper objects and those from Harappa. It is also extremely significant that Harappan pottery has been found at Padiya Pajyali in the Sikar district and at Chava Siri in the Jhunjhunu district, both of which form the heart of the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura cultural zone.²⁰⁵ Also, the presence at Sabania, Bikaner, of two copper celts inscribed with the Indus script is decidedly suggestive of the presence of Harappan contacts.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Smyth, *Gazetteer of Sukkur*, p. 23.

²⁰⁴ D.P. Agrawal, 'Metal Technology of the Harappans', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁰⁵ *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1980–81, p. 56; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1981–82, p. 62.

²⁰⁶ R.C. Agrawala and V. Kumar, 'Ganeshwar-Jodhpura Culture: New Traits in Indian Archaeology', in G.L. Possehl ed., *op. cit.*, p. 131.

plain with Harappa. The Indus river would have been, as it became since then, an important channel of communication. E.H. Aitken, in 1907, in his discussion on the trade of Sind admitted that 'before there were any railways in India, a river like the Indus seemed to give to the Province that possessed it an advantage which defied competition.'¹⁹³ However, he pointed out certain major obstacles in this, such as the fact that the navigation of its mouths was dangerous and also that its currents were so strong that the passage of boats going upstream was extremely slow. In this regard we may also mention the observations of Alexander F. Baillie who, in a major work on Karachi, noted that whereas the riverine route (in which, of course, camels carried goods for a brief span from Gharra to Jerruck where they were again embarked on the Indus) took twenty-one and a half days at the cost of Rs. 52, by the direct road to Sehwan, the journey by camels took twelve days at the cost of Rs. 7 per camel.¹⁹⁴ There were several overland routes connecting southern Sind with the northern regions. An old trade route went north from Karachi to Thano Bula Khan and entered Larkana district, north of the Laki range. This route was undoubtedly significant in this period considering the cluster of sites all along it from the Karachi district where there was a concentration of sites around Allahdino to Karchat, Amri, Ghazi Shah, Ali Murad, Lohumjodaro to Mohenjodaro in the Larkana district. That the route went upto the Sukkur-Rohri hills, an important source of flint for Harappa, is also undoubted. In fact, in the early twentieth century, the normal trunk road from the Karachi coast entered the Sukkur district from both the right and the left banks of the Indus river and then continued to Multan, in which area broadly, Harappa was located in the third-second millennium BC.¹⁹⁵

We do not think that any significant routes followed the eastern bank of the Indus river to Harappa, in the light of the paucity of sites there. At the same time, although there are hardly any sites in the lower eastern Sind region, higher up Chanhudaro,¹⁹⁶ Kot Diji¹⁹⁷ and Naru Waro Dharo¹⁹⁸ do show evidence of coastal and inter-regional contact. It is our contention that the Indus was crossed around these points by ferries, ferry crossings being numerous even in the early part of the present century. In the Nawabshah,¹⁹⁹ Hyderabad,²⁰⁰ Sukkur²⁰¹ and Larkana²⁰² districts among others,

¹⁹³ Aitken, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁴ A.F. Baillie, *Kurrachee Past, Present and Future*, Karachi, 1890, reprint 1975, p. 39.

¹⁹⁵ J.W. Smyth, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind III Sukkur District*, Bombay, 1919, pp. 20-21.

¹⁹⁶ Mackay, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-233.

¹⁹⁷ Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁹⁸ Excavations at Naru Waro Dharo, *Pakistan Archaeology* 1, 1964, pp. 44.

¹⁹⁹ J.W. Smyth, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind V Nawabshah District*, Bombay, 1920, p. 14.

²⁰⁰ J.W. Smyth, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind II Hyderabad District*, Bombay, 1920, p. 17.

²⁰¹ J.W. Smyth, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind III Sukkur District*, Bombay, 1919, p. 23.

²⁰² J.W. Smyth, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind Larkana District*, Bombay, 1919, p. 22.

Another route which must have been of some importance, especially in the context of the exploitation of lapis lazuli, went northwest of Chitral through the Dorah pass; this leads into the Badakshan district of Afghanistan.¹⁸⁷ A route may also have gone via Kabul—north of the Khawak pass, above Kabul, the Khosh-Tapa hoard has yielded some specimens (nos. 7, 8, 13, 17) which are made in an Indian style or with Indian elements.¹⁸⁸

Sind Coast–Sind–Harappa

The postulate of a trans-regional axis from the Karachi coast, cutting across the Sind plains towards the Bari doab, probably going beyond towards the northern highlands can be validated on the basis of several kinds of data. First, Sind with its large monumental Harappan centres, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, and Juderijodaro being the most well known examples, was one of the core zones within the spatial spread of the Indus Civilisation and it is likely that it intermeshed through trade and other cultural contacts with other urban centres of similar magnitude in contiguous zones such as the central Indus plains' city of Harappa. Second, at Harappa, small-scale shell working was undertaken, for which the raw material in the light of the provenance of the gastropods, *Turbinella pyrum* and *Fascolaria trapezium* were being procured from the Sind coastline. Finished artifacts in marine shells and coral have also been recovered at Harappa in significant quantities. Third, artifacts in shell and coral have been found at contemporary sites in Derajat,¹⁸⁹ the Swat¹⁹⁰ and Dir regions, and Shortugai;¹⁹¹ the likelihood of Harappa mediating this traffic in artifacts of marine origin is strong since the route or routes towards the north went through the Bari doab. Fourth, certain raw materials from the Sind region, such as, crypto-crystalline semi-precious stones and flint, were being procured by Harappa; in fact, flint blades were reaching the site from the Rohri hills. The presence of artifacts of these raw materials in the Sind plains itself from the pre-Harappan period onwards is also significant. Finally, although the exact significance of maritime trade in the context of the external contacts of the Indus Civilisation is controversial, that some seaborne trade was taking place is undoubted and, elements of it reached into Harappa, following the basic orientation of the routes linking the coast and the inner Indus plains.¹⁹²

There were several routes connecting the coast through the lower Indus

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁸⁸ L. Dupree, P. Gouin and N. Omer, 'The Khosh Tapa hoard from North Afghanistan,' *Archaeology* 24, 1971, p. 33.

¹⁸⁹ Dani, *op. cit.*, 1970–71, p. 86.

¹⁹⁰ See footnotes 174–176.

¹⁹¹ Francfort, *op. cit.*

¹⁹² The lapis lazuli flower pendant in inlay and a one holed cylinder seal are among the Mesopotamian inspired artifacts at Harappa. See Vats, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 441.

A.H. Dani¹⁸²: (a) over the Malakand pass to Dargai; (b) through the eastern end from Barikot, through the Karakar pass-Buner valley-Ambedla pass to the Sudama plain where Shahbazgarhi stands; and (c) in between Malakand and Karakar where the Shahkot pass connects Chakdara, Thana and Jamalgarhi via Sanghav and Katlang. The distribution of lapis lazuli artifacts in the protohistoric sites that occupied approximately the same chronological time bracket is also indicative of movement along this axis—Bir-Kot Ghundai, Gumla in the Gomal valley, and Harappa in the central Indus plains. Jade from Chinese Turkestan may also have followed broadly the same axis, since jade beads and pendants are found at the monumental centre of Harappa and at Bir-Kot Ghundai, Loebanr and Ghaligai. It is also not simply coincidental that C.M. Enriquez, the author of an early work on the Pathan frontier, noted at a mound south of Bannu town 'pottery, beads, signets, and bits of polished jade and agate'. Since the major mounds of Bannu belong to the 2nd millennium BC, it may be possible that these above-mentioned artifacts belong to the same phase.¹⁸³

From Swat, the Dir and Chitral regions, very much within the ambit of the neolithic-chalcolithic horizons of this period were traversed to reach Yarkand, from where one route went up to Kashgar and the other down to Khotan. It is interesting that in spite of tremendous physical difficulties of routes along this axis, active trade between these regions occurred even in the nineteenth century. For instance, E.F. Knight in *Where Three Empires Meet* noted active interaction between the Karakoram and the Indus valley: 'The Gilgit merchants obtained their goods from India through Chilas by the Indus Valley route, despite the heavy tolls they have to pay to the tribesmen, so far preferable is this way to the Gilgit road, with its high passes and dangers.'¹⁸⁴

The geographical possibilities for mediating interaction with Russian Central Asia and Afghanistan through the Swat region are several. First, from Hunza and the Pamirs, Afghanistan and Central Asia could be approached to the west. Incidentally, this was an important route in the nineteenth century, as is evident from Knight's description of the goods found by the troops he accompanied to the Thum of Hunza's castle.¹⁸⁵ The goods from Russia included tooth powder, boxes of rouge, pots of pomades, cosmetics, a number of Russian prints, samovars, matches and candles. Since Hunza had to be traversed in the Harappan context to reach the jade resources of Chinese Turkestan, it is possible that it also mediated trade in raw materials from Russia. The pass that lay in Hunza was the Kilik pass that led across the extreme east of Afghan territory (Wakhan) into Russian Turkestan.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² A.H. Dani, 'Timargarha and Gandhara Grave Culture', *Ancient Pakistan* 3, 1967, p. 12.

¹⁸³ Enriquez, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁴ E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, London, 1894, p. 306.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 477, 483-484.

¹⁸⁶ H.L. Nevill, *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, Pakistan, first print 1910, reprint 1977, p. 3.

sites of this region seem to have been using many of the raw materials of Central Asian and Chinese provenance which were being transported from there to Harappa and other contemporary sites. For instance, gold, lapis lazuli, and jade artifacts are found at Bir-Kot Ghundai,¹⁷⁴ lapis lazuli and jade at Loebanr,¹⁷⁵ jade at Ghaligai¹⁷⁶ and gold at Kherari.¹⁷⁷ As regards Harappan links with Afghanistan, the presence of the Harappan site of Shortugai off the Amu Darya is well known. Among the striking Harappan or Harappan inspired artifacts there, one may mention painted and unpainted ceramics which 'all reproduce, carefully, their Harappan models', terracotta 'cakes', long tubular and etched carnelian beads, *Turbinella pyrum* bangles, Harappan graffiti on jar rims and beakers and a square Harappan seal.¹⁷⁸ At Dashly 3, located to the north-west of Balkh, alabaster plates decorated with trefoils and a humped bull in an undoubtedly Harappan style, as well as two small kidney-shaped vases close to the equivalent Harappan examples have been noted.¹⁷⁹ While no artifactual evidence for suggesting Harappan contacts with China is available, there are artifactual similarities with the cultural repertoire of the 'intermediary' region i.e., the Swat and its adjacent valleys. The significant artifactual elements of Chinese inspiration are the presence of stone shaft-holed harvesters, bone pins shaped like a 't'ao t'ieh' mask, and representations on the pottery of Bir-Kot Ghundai (Period IV) which are similar to those on the ceramics of the Yang Shao culture of north China.¹⁸⁰

The distribution of neolithic and chalcolithic settlements and graveyard sites all over the hill-girt region north of the Indus and the interleaving of important lines of movement with this pattern, highlighted by most archaeological writings on the frontier region, suggests the links with Harappa from the Derajat region northwards. From Derajat, the route went through the Bannu basin and Kohat to Peshawar—traditionally, a considerable quantity of salt went by this route from Kohat.¹⁸¹ The routes from the Swat valley to the Peshawar plain have been outlined by

¹⁷⁴ G. Stacul, 'Bir-kot-ghundai (Swat, Pakistan), 1978 Excavation Report', *East and West* 30, 1980, pp. 59–61.

¹⁷⁵ G. Stacul, 'Loebanr III (Swat, Pakistan), 1979 Excavation Report', *East and West* 30, 1980, pp. 68–72; G. Stacul, 'Dwelling and Storage Pits at Loebanr III (Swat, Pakistan), 1976 Excavation Report', *East and West* 27, 1977, pp. 232–51; C.S. Antonini and G. Stacul, *The Protohistoric Graveyards of Swat*, Rome, 1972, pp. 62–243.

¹⁷⁶ G. Stacul, 'Cultural Change in the Swat Valley and beyond, c. 3000–1400 BC', in B. Allchin ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 209; G. Stacul, 'The Black burnished ware period in the Swat Valley (c. 1700–1500 BC)', in M. Taddei ed., *op. cit.*, 1979, pp. 644–89.

¹⁷⁷ G. Stacul, *Ibid.*, 1979, p. 662.

¹⁷⁸ Francfort, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

¹⁸⁰ Stacul, *op. cit.*, p. 671; G. Stacul, 'Painted Pottery from the Swat Valley, Pakistan', in H. Hartel ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 306–311; Stacul, *op. cit.*, 1984, p. 210.

¹⁸¹ C.M. Enriquez, *The Pathan Borderlands*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 93.

strikingly by Harappan Gumla. Additionally, the Derajat region provided access into north Baluchistan, where a Harappan presence is attested to, and which was also providing serpentine and lapis lazuli to Harappa. Theoretically, there are a large number of routes from north Baluchistan to the Indus plains. James Dowie's comments on the access through the Suleiman mountains make this reasonably clear:

The drainage of the western slopes of the Suliman range finding no exit on that side has had to wear out ways for itself towards the plains between the foot of the hills and the Indus. This is the explanation of the large number of passes, about one hundred, which lead from the plains into the Suliman. The chief from north to south are the Vehoa, the Sangarh, the Khair, the Kaha, the Chachar, and the Siri, called from the torrents which flow through them to the plains. There is an easy route through the Chahchar to Baluchistan.¹⁷⁰

The presence of Harappan remains at Periano Ghundai, located in the Fort Sandeman area through which the Gomal defile is reached for access into the Derajat region, suggests however, that the Gomal pass was among the important points of entry into Baluchistan.¹⁷¹

Through the Derajat province, an equally significant communication axis came to Harappa from the tangled mass of mountains and valley pockets of the Swat and Dir areas which provided access from Central Asia and Afghanistan. Culturally, the importance of this route stemmed from it being the main channel through which Harappa, along with contemporary Harappan sites in the neighbouring sub-regions came to procure resources such as jade, lapis lazuli, silver, gold and copper from Central Asia and Afghanistan. The basic artifactual elements that also suggest interaction along this axis may be summarised. While no Harappan settlements have been found in the Barin basin, through which this trade route lay, the continuance of the early Harappan settlements of Islam Chauki and Tarakai Qila implies the presence of a cultural pocket there which was contemporary to the mature Indus phenomenon.¹⁷² Higher north, while the protohistoric sequence of the North West Frontier highlands and lowlands remained aloof from the mature Indus tradition, the pottery of Ghaligai, an important contemporary settlement in the Swat valley, which was a fine, wheel turned ware, pink to brick red, often decorated with black bands, has been related to that of the Harappan Civilisation.¹⁷³ More significantly, the protohistoric

¹⁷⁰ J. Dowie, *The Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir*, Delhi, first published in 1916, reprint 1974, p. 27.

¹⁷¹ M.R. Mughal, 'Explorations in Northern Baluchistan', *Pakistan Archaeology* 8, 1972, p. 141.

¹⁷² Thomas and Allchin, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39.

¹⁷³ G. Stacul, 'Cultural change in the Swat Valley and beyond, c. 3000-1400 BC', in B. Allchin ed., *South Asian Archaeology 1981*, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 205-9.

With reference to the first route, economically, the wide availability in the Salt range and some intermediary hilly outliers such as the Chiniot, Kirana and Dhak escarpments, of steatite, gypsum, jasper, limestone, slate, granite, basalt, haematite, is of primary significance. Both the proto-historic and pre-modern traditions of exploitation in a number of the above-mentioned raw materials emphasise their possible exploitation by Harappa. At the same time, the absence of settlements with a mature, urban Harappan phase in the Potwar plateau has to be considered. In this context, the implications of several late radiocarbon dates from the sites of Sarai Khola, Jhang and Hathial West in this region are suggestive of the survival of the early Harappan (i.e., the Kot Dijian level) culture and, consequently, being contemporaneous with the urban Indus tradition.¹⁶⁷

The basic interaction must have been along two routes, both of which emanated from the Jhang district. The main direction from Harappa to Jhang where the Kirana and Chiniot escarpments were readily accessible may have followed the trunk route mentioned by the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* that used to be taken by traffic coming from Delhi across Pak Pattan, crossing the Ravi to go to Jhang.¹⁶⁸ The Ravi, incidentally, used to be crossed by fourteen ferries. From the Jhang district, after crossing the Chenab, the Jhelum could have been followed to the Potwar plateau; incidentally the Jhelum was a navigable river and Punjab salt used to be exported to Multan by it. Whether it was mediating traffic between Harappa and the Salt range in this period is not certain since the intervening region has not revealed any Harappan sites; nevertheless, considering the ease of communication through this route between the two regions, it may have been in use in the protohistoric period. The second route could have gone along the Indus into the Derajat region where Harappan Gumla stood. A section of the Gomul plain, where Musakhel was flourishing in the early Harappan period, is located only four miles south of the Salt range, and it is likely that this region provided an access, albeit indirect, between the Potwar region and Harappa. The presence of a Harappan seal at Musakhel underlines this connection.¹⁶⁹

The Derajat district was significant in the pattern of routes lying to the north of Harappa partly because of its raw material resources such as crypto-crystalline semi-precious stones and different kinds of ordinary stones as well, which were found as *in situ* occurrences and in the form of water-worn pebbles in the Gomul and Takhwar rivers. These resources, incidentally, were also used in a broadly contemporary context in the region itself, most

¹⁶⁷ K.D. Thomas and F.R. Allchin, 'Radiocarbon dating of some early sites in N.W. Pakistan', *South Asian Studies* 2, 1986, pp. 37-44.

¹⁶⁸ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford, 1908, p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ F.R. Allchin, 'The Northern Limits of the Harappan Culture Zone', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *op. cit.*, p. 52.

ornaments, knives, chisels, adzes, rings, beads and segmented and whole slit discs from Kansu, Honan and Shansi.¹⁶⁴

Gold

In 1983, Lansdell noted, among other occurrences, the presence of gold at twenty-two places in Khotan.¹⁶⁵

Lines of Communication

The centrality of the urban centre of Harappa to the internal resources available in the upper Indus plains, the North West Frontier highlands and lowlands, Rajasthan and Sind has been highlighted. The point here is that although Harappa was located in a broad alluvial expanse, the range of raw materials that it exploited with the exception of jade, were largely accessible in either (a) conjoining regions, the Derajat being one such example, (b) regions within the Harappan distribution area, such as Sind and Baluchistan, or (c) regions, which while being geographically outside the larger hinterland of the Bari doab displayed clear cultural contacts with the Indus Civilisation; Afghanistan and Rajasthan are two such areas. This outline of the procurement and distribution of different kinds of raw materials used at Harappa along with the evidence of cultural linkages and site distribution, in our opinion, clearly hints at the significant lines of movement that articulated trade and contacts there.

Regions to the North of the Indus-Harappa

The communication axis in the region, stretching from the Bari doab right till the Hindukush and the Karakoram mountains can be visualised along several lines. Firstly, there were interconnections between the Bari doab and the Potwar plateau. Secondly, routes went across the Indus to the Derajat province, a core region, for providing access along a number of directions. Among other texts, the *Narrative of various journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab* of Charles Masson published in 1842 evocatively described the nature of traffic that traditionally passed through the Derajat and the symbiosis of its traditional agricultural economy with elements of the *kafila* traffic coming from different, often far-flung, areas there.¹⁶⁶ In the period under discussion, the Derajat seems to have mediated interaction between Baluchistan and Harappa on the one hand and the Bannu-Peshawar axis through which access was gained into Central Asia and Afghanistan, on the other hand.

¹⁶⁴ A. Salmony, *Chinese Jade Throughout the Wei Dynasty*, New York, 1963, p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ H. Lansdell, *Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1893.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Masson, *Narrative of various journeys in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*, Volume I, Chapters III and IV, Austria, 1842, reprint 1975.

lead ore from an ancient lead mine at Faranj showed 1 1/2 ounces of silver per ton of lead.¹⁵⁹

Gold

Gold is known to exist three miles to the north of Kandahar where mining had been abandoned shortly before 1881—the contact zone where gold was found was traced to the south-west for a distance of about seven miles.¹⁶⁰ E. Pascoe also noted the region to the north side of the Hindu Kush where small quantities occurred as also in the streams draining the Kuh-i-Baba, Kohistan, above Laghman and Kunar.¹⁶¹

China

Jade

S.C. Nott has outlined jade occurrences in China:¹⁶² (a) the dark green variety was obtained mainly from Barkul, Manas in Sungaria, the country surrounding Lake Baikal and the mountain slopes of western Yunnan; (b) an emerald green variety could be obtained from Lan t'ien on the borders of the province of Shensi; (c) jadeite occurs *in situ* in the Pamir region, the valley of the Tunga which is a tributary on the left bank of the Raskem Darra; (d) the nephrite variety of jade is known to occur in Khotan and Yarkand in Eastern Turkestan, the jade mountains in Belurtag on the upper waters of the Tisnab river about eighty miles from Yarkand being possibly the most notable source of supply. Nott has also quoted the testimony of a Manchu author (Hsi Yu Wen Chien Liu, published in 1777 AD) in this regard.¹⁶³

There is a river in Yarkand in which are found Jade pebbles. The largest are as big as round fruit dishes, or square peck measures, the smallest are the size of a fist or chestnut and some of the boulders weigh more than five hundred pounds. There are many different colours, among which snow white, kingfisher green, beeswax yellow, Cinnabar red, and ink black, are all considered valuable.

Protohistoric Tradition: It is also well known that jade was exploited in China from the neolithic period onwards. The jade artifacts in what Alfred Salmony calls the pre-Anyang period i.e., from the nebulous Hsia period (2205 BC) till 1200 BC include neolithic axes from Siberia, and flat ring

¹⁵⁹ La Touche, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

¹⁶⁰ E. Pascoe, 1931, 'Minerals and Metals', in J. Marshall ed., Volume II, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 674.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² S.C. Nott, *Chinese Jade Throughout the Ages*, London, 1936, pp. 1,2,13.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Sample Number	Cu (%)	Ag (gm/tonne)
A	7.61	4.18
B	—	20.66
C	—	2.00

There are old workings for lead, silver and zinc at Aguncha which have been dated to 990 BC.¹⁵¹ Lead with 11 per cent silver per ton has also been noted at Jodawas, Alwar.¹⁵²

Feldspar

The presence of feldspar near Ajmer, Alwar, Dungarpur and Jodhpur has been reported by B.C. Roy.¹⁵³

Lapis Lazuli

The presence of lapis lazuli in the Nagpahar hills, three miles to the west of Ajmer had been mentioned by R.H. Irvine, although this report was never confirmed subsequently.¹⁵⁴

Protohistoric Tradition: A lapis lazuli bead was found at the site of Ahar.¹⁵⁵

Afghanistan and Central Asia

Lapis Lazuli

Lapis lazuli is known to occur in significant quantities in the Kokcha valley south of Fergamu in Badakshan and in the western end of Lake Baikal in Siberia.¹⁵⁶

Protohistoric Tradition: At the Harappan site of Shortugai, situated 25 kms from the Kokcha river in whose upper course the famous lapis lazuli mines of Badakshan are located, lapis lazuli beads, chunks and fragments have been found.¹⁵⁷

Silver

Important silver mines exist at the head of Panjshir valley in south-east Hindukush, in the vicinity of Herat.¹⁵⁸ La Touche noted that samples of

¹⁵¹ Information received in a personal discussion from D.K. Chakrabarti.

¹⁵² La Touche, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

¹⁵³ Roy, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-44.

¹⁵⁴ See Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 161 and La Touche, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹⁵⁵ H.D. Sankalia, S.B. Deo and Z.D. Ansari, *Excavations at Ahar*, Poona, 1969, p. 163.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. S. Asthana, 'Harappan Trade in Metals and Minerals: A Regional Approach', in G. Possehl ed., *op. cit.*, p. 273.

¹⁵⁷ H.P. Francfort, 'The Harappan Settlement of Shortughai', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *op. cit.*, p. 303.

¹⁵⁸ Asthana, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

In 1987, R.S. Jain recorded the discovery of gold incidence in Rajasthan.¹⁴⁶ This gold mineralisation, which occurs in the greenstone belts in the rocks of the Mangalwar Complex and the Hindoli group, was identified in certain areas of the Jahazpur belt which were visited by the author in January 1987. The specific areas are:

Bhilwara District: The areas of the Jahazpur belt which indicated gold mineralisation are the areas of Devatalai and Amargarh. The core sample of quartz reef from Devatalai assayed 0.2 g Au/tonne while a surface grab sample from the same reef assayed 0.4 g Au/tonne. A grab sample of sheared quartz reef from the pit mouth of one of the old workings in Amargarh assayed 1.8 g Au/tonne.

Ajmer District: About three km east of Kharwa, southeast of a small village called Gwara, is a well which is reported to be an old working for gold. It was suggested that this area should be checked up for gold.

Jhunjhunu District: In the Kolihan copper mine, Jhunjhunu district, ore shoots with high copper content were also found to contain a high percentage of gold.¹⁴⁷ The percentage of recoverable gold based on the metallurgical tests performed on bulk samples are as follows:

Sample Number	Cu (%)	Au (gm/tonne)
A	7.61	1.53
B	—	3.0
C	2.73	0.4

Also, at Usri in the Jhunjhunu district (rich in copper deposits), a large number of old workings in the south-western part were supposed to have been worked for gold.¹⁴⁸ The mine spoil consists mostly of quartz vein debris with occasional malachite stains.

Silver

That the galena of the Zawar mines in Udaipur is argentiferous is well known. B.C. Roy, for instance, noted the recovery of silver by cupellation from the lead concentrates by the Metal Corporation of India's smelters at Tundoo.¹⁴⁹ Also, at the Kolihan copper mine (Central block) in the Khetri belt, a percentage of silver was recovered from certain ore shoots by the Geological Survey of India; the percentage of the recoverable silver is given below:¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ R.S. Jain, Gold Incidence in Rajasthan, *Records of the Geological Survey of India* 113, 1987, pp. 99–103.

¹⁴⁷ Raghunandan *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁹ B.C. Roy, *The Economic Geology and Mineral Resources of Rajasthan and Ajmer, Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India* No. 86, Delhi, 1959, p. 276.

¹⁵⁰ Raghunandan *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75.

Sr. No.	Deposit	Location	Code	Evidence of Old Workings
	Akola (Dariba)	near Akola vill.	—	Few old workings with small slag heaps and mine dumps
10.	Banswara belt Jharka	Banswara dist.	Chalcopryrite	Three zones of old workings viz., eastern, western, & northern (1.47 km, 1.2 km, and 2.5 km. respectively)
11.	Delawara belt Karoll	Udaipur dist.	Chalcopryrite	Extensive old workings including shafts (1.8 km)
12.	Dungarpur Zone Padar-ki-Pal	Dungarpur dist.	Pyrite Bornite Chalcopryrite	Old workings & slag heaps
	Amjhara	Dungarpur dist.	Chalcopryrite Bornite	Old pits with mine dumps
13.	Bikramsar Bidasar	Bikaner dist.	—	Old workings

Sr.No.	Deposit	Location	Code	Evidence of Old Workings
	GoI-Badshahpur	Jaipur dist.	Pyrite Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite Bornite	Old workings (2 km) with mine dumps and slag heaps
4.	Lalsot-Nithor Khansera belt			
	Khankhera	Bharatpur dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Old workings
5.	Jahazpur belt Jhikri-Amargarh Block	—	—	Old workings
6.	Western Copper Zone Devpura-Banera Pur-Dariba	—	—	Two major old workings—Dariba main pit and parallel trench, with slag heaps Old workings and some slag heaps
7.	Jasina-Rewara-Karor belt Rewara	Bhilwara dist. Chittorgarh dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Shallow depressions, many of them narrow vertical shafts
8.	Kalahudi-Bethumni Zone Satdhudia	Bhilwara dist.	—	Series of old workings
9.	Hari-Bhopalsagar-Akola Zone Hari	Chittorgarh dist.	Chalcopyrite, Pyrrhotite Pyrite	Chains of old workings with mine dumps and slag heaps (1.8 km)

Sr. No.	Deposit	Location	Code	Evidence of Old Workings
	Taonda	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Old workings (600 m)
	Malwali	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Old workings
	Bokhri	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Small pits (1.5 Km.)
	Sheopuragarh	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Three small old workings
	Kakrana	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Old workings
	Naori	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Small old workings
	Ponk	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Impressive old workings
	Satkui.	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Old shafts and open pits
	Goria	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Narrow old shafts
	Dhanota	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Impressive old workings
	Nangal	Jhunjhunu dist.	—	Shallow old pits.
2.	Nim-ka-Thana belt Baleswar	Sikar dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrite Pyrrhotite	Developed old workings, Scattered slag, mine dumps, well planned old mining colonies
3.	Alwar-Jaipur belt Baldeogarh	Alwar dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Oldworking
	Nalladeswar	Alwar dist.	—	Old workings
	Kalajoda	Alwar dist.	Pyrite Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite	Number of shafts with large slag dumps
	Pratapgarh	Alwar dist.	—	Old workings consisting of underground stopes, huge dumps of mine spoil
	Matasula	Alwar dist.	—	Old shafts

Chart 2
Copper Deposits of Rajasthan

Sr. No.	Deposit	Location	Code	Evidence of Old Workings
1.	Khetri deposit (Madhan Kudhan)	Jhunjhunu dist.	Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Extensive old workings with large mine dumps over a length of 1.5 kms.
	Kolihan	Jhunjhunu dist.	Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Number of old workings.
	Kalapahar	Jhunjhunu dist.	Pyrite Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite	Old workings (450m)
	Kolihan	Jhunjhunu dist.	Pyrrhotite Pyrite	Old workings (900 m)
	Deoro	Jhunjhunu dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrrhotite Pyrite	Old workings (210 m) and small slag heaps
	Papurna	Jhunjhunu dist.	Pyrrhotite Chalcopyrite Pyrite	Group of old workings at Badawali
	Dholamala	Jhunjhunu dist.	Chalcopyrite Pyrrhotite Pyrite	60 workings (450 m)
	Usri	3.5 km S.E. of Khetri town	Pyrite Chalcopyrite Pyrrhotite	20 old workings (800 m) (gold workings?)
	Rampur	Jhunjhunu dist.		Old workings with minor slag dumps (150 m)

in the Banās basin of the Mewar plain which has yielded heaps of slag-like material along with a part of a furnace is significant, especially in the context of the recovery of etched carnelian beads there, an artifact clearly of Harappan provenance.¹⁴⁰ The Ganeshwar-Jodhpura complex which dominated North-east Rajasthan during the second millennium BC provides an impressive metallurgical repertoire and widescale evidence of copper smelting. Copper slag and/or evidence of copper smelting is available from the protohistoric sites of Gaonri, Gaonri Bandh, Kulra, Nimodh, Para Bhitarkī-Dhani, Umrawala, Chinchroli, Banar, Oda-ki-Dhani, Aheerwala, Basedi, Bihar, Chamrauli, Delsar, Dhoonwala, Dilpura, Golyari, Khadra, Khalra, Kishore Para, Loharwas Sota, Mungter, Purana Kothuka, Pyopara Tigri and Buchera.¹⁴¹

Lead

There are a large number of lead deposits in Rajasthan, many of which indicate the presence of old workings. The main areas where lead deposits are found are the Ajmer lead-zinc zone, the Jahazpur lead-zinc-copper belt, the Pur-Banera belt, the Zawar lead-zinc belt, the Dariba-Rajapura Bethumni lead-zinc belt, the Basantgarh-Deri belt, the Rampura-Agucha zone, the Jasma-Rewara-Karor belt, the Salampura-Kochriya area, the Banswara lead-zinc belt, along with some minor occurrences in Basantgarh.¹⁴²

Many of these belts also show evidence of early workings. One of the most famous of these mining sites is that of Zawar, on the banks of the Tiri river which has been studied in some depth by the University of Baroda in collaboration with the Hindustan Zinc Limited and the Research Laboratory of the British Museum, under the direction of K.T.M. Hegde.¹⁴³ Old workings have also been noted at Ghugra (Ajmer district) and Chauthka-Barwara (Sawai Madhopur district).¹⁴⁴

Gold

One of the earliest modern references to the presence of auriferous gold in Rajasthan is that of K.D. Erskine in the Rajputana Gazetteer of *The Western Rajputana States Residency and the Bikaner Agency*. Erskine mentioned the presence of traces of gold noticed by a certain Major Hughes near Rohira in 1897.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ H.D. Sankalia, S.B. Deo and Z.D. Ansari, *Excavations at Ahar*, Poona, 1969, pp. 165, 226; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1955–56, p. 11.

¹⁴¹ *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1978–79, p. 20; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1980–81, p. 56; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1979–80, pp. 62–65; R.C. Agrawala, 'Recent Explorations in Rajasthan', *Man and Environment*, 5, 1981, p. 60.

¹⁴² Raghunandan *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65.

¹⁴³ *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1983–84, p. 77; Also see L. Willies, P.T. Craddock, L.J. Gurjar and K.T.M. Hegde, 'Ancient lead and zinc mining in Rajasthan, India', *World Archaeology*, 16, 1984, pp. 222–233.

¹⁴⁴ Raghunandan *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–114.

¹⁴⁵ Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

Steatite

M.R. Mughal has mentioned the presence of steatite or talc in two localities in the Zhob district, the significant deposits of which were mined north of Fort Sandeman in the past.¹³³

Rajasthan

Copper

The copper mineralisation in Rajasthan is probably one of the most extensive that exists in India and is found in almost all areas in the state. Detailed accounts of these copper deposits are available in a number of works,¹³⁴ although the most comprehensive work in this regard is the documentation done recently by the Geological Survey of India entitled *Exploration for Copper, Lead and Zinc Ores in India*.¹³⁵ Chart 2 contains details of the various mineralised belts in Rajasthan, the nature of various deposits and the presence of old workings. We consider the old workings of copper in Bikaner state noted by K.D. Erskine at Bikramsar and Bidasar to be of some significance.¹³⁶ James Todd's remarks on the profitability of the mines was mentioned by Erskine—the first mine, in the opinion of Todd, did not repay the expense of working, while the second was almost exhausted after having been worked for nearly thirty years.

Unfortunately, although the copper reserves and old workings of Rajasthan have been known and exploited for a very long time, there is a great paucity of scientific dating. Regrettably the available radiocarbon dates for Khetri are only medieval or modern.¹³⁷ Recently, six copper-ore mining and smelting sites were investigated for lead isotope dating in the Aravallis, the results of which are not available as yet.¹³⁸ K.T.M. Hegde also recently reported the dating of timber supports from a gallery set at a depth of 120 m at the Rajpura-Dariba mines in Udaipur district; the radiocarbon date is 3120 B.P., i.e., the last quarter of the second millennium BC.¹³⁹

Protohistoric Tradition: The early protohistoric copper smelting site of Ahar

¹³³ M.R. Mughal, *The Early Harappan Period in the Greater Indus Valley and Northern Baluchistan*, Pennsylvania, 1971, p. 194.

¹³⁴ B.D. Agrawal, *Rajasthan District Gazetteers Sikar*, Jaipur, 1978; *The Rajputana District Gazetteer*, Volume I, Calcutta, 1879; *The Wealth of India*, Volume II, New Delhi, 1950.

¹³⁵ K.R. Raghunandan, B.K. Dhruva Rao, M.L. Singhal, *Exploration for Copper, Lead and Zinc Ores in India*, *Bulletins of the Geological Survey of India Series A*, Economic Geology No. 47, Calcutta, 1981.

¹³⁶ K.D. Erskine, *Rajputana Gazetteers III-A, The Western Rajputana States Residency and the Bikaner Agency*, Allahabad, 1909, p. 351.

¹³⁷ G.L. Possehl, 'Radiocarbon Dates from South Asia', *Man and Environment*, 12, 1988, p. 184.

¹³⁸ K.T.M. Hegde, 'Scientific Studies in Indian Archaeology', *Recent Advances in Indian Archaeology* (S.B. Deo and K. Paddayya), Poona, 1985, pp. 160–169.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

'...agate, jasper and carnelian are found in the Lyari hills, the Porali basin, the Kohistan and the Hab River valley'.¹¹⁷ Louis Flam, relying on W.T. Blanford, noted chalcedony in the Laki hills, as well as agate, although the location of the latter is not mentioned.¹¹⁸

Protohistoric Tradition: In the pre-Harappan period, agate and carnelian beads are known to occur at Ghazi Shah,¹¹⁹ Gorandi,¹²⁰ and Ali Murad.¹²¹ In the Harappan period, a carnelian bead and chalcedony weights have been found at Thano Bula Khan,¹²² agate objects at Allahdino,¹²³ a jasper bead at Jhukar,¹²⁴ a carnelian bead and chalcedony weight at Lohumjodaro,¹²⁵ a carnelian bead and agate bead at Ali Murad,¹²⁶ chalcedony beads at Karchat,¹²⁷ carnelian beads, agate and jasper beads and weights at Mohenjodaro,¹²⁸ and carnelian lumps, pendants, beads, agate weights and unfinished beads, jasper beads and a weight and chalcedony beads at Chanhudaro.¹²⁹

Baluchistan

Lapis Lazuli

M. Usman Hasan recently noted the discovery of early prehistoric mines of lapis lazuli in the Chagai district of Baluchistan. The lapis lazuli mines where Usman Hasan and J.F. Jarrige were taken by the local people, are located at Bi-Bi-Dick, about thirty five miles north of Dalbandin near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.¹³⁰

Serpentine

Zhob-Loralai District: A number of igneous intrusions of gabbro altered into serpentine are found here.¹³¹

Quetta-Pishin District: Serpentine is found in the east of the Pishin district.¹³²

¹¹⁷ W.A. Fairervis Jr., 'Allahdino: a small site of the Harappan Civilization', in G. Possehl ed., *Harappan Civilization*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 111.

¹¹⁸ Flam, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹¹⁹ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 90-91.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 102-106.

¹²² Ibid., p. 142.

¹²³ *Pakistan Archaeology I*, *op. cit.*

¹²⁴ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-18.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 51-58.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 89-96.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

¹²⁸ Marshall, *op. cit.*, 1931, pp. 31-32, 104, 520, 536-541, 544.

¹²⁹ Mackay, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 52, 202-204, 208-210, 226-227, 242, 244.

¹³⁰ M.U. Hasan, 'Recent Archaeological Finds in Baluchistan and their Implications', paper presented at the *South Asian Archaeological Congress*, Delhi, 1986 (cyclostyled), p. 5.

¹³¹ C.F. Minchin, *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series, Zhob District*, Bombay 1907, p. 2; C.F. Minchin, *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series II, Loralai District*, Allahabad, 1907, p. 27.

¹³² R.H. Buller and J. Rai, *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series V, Quetta-Pishin District*, Ajmer, 1907, p. 17.

best known occurrences are those from the Sukkur and Rohri hills; in the latter region, in an area of approximately 40 by 16 kms, a number of factory sites for the extraction and dressing of chert artifacts existed.⁸⁴

Protohistoric Tradition: In a pre-Harappan context, (a) in south Sind, chert microliths have been found at Amri,⁸⁵ Damb Buthi,⁸⁶ Ghazi Shah,⁸⁷ Gorandi,⁸⁸ Ali Murad,⁸⁹ Kohtras Buthi,⁹⁰ Othmanjo Buthi,⁹¹ Khajur,⁹² Lohri,⁹³ Bandhni,⁹⁴ Pandi Wahi,⁹⁵ Chauro,⁹⁶ and Tando Rahim Khan,⁹⁷ (b) at Kot Diji⁹⁸ in upper Sind, chert microliths have been recovered. In the Harappan period, in south Sind, chert microliths have been found at Dhal,⁹⁹ Thano Bula Khan,¹⁰⁰ Naru Waro Dharo,¹⁰¹ Goth Hasan Ali,¹⁰² Tharro on Gujo,¹⁰³ Amri,¹⁰⁴ Allahadino,¹⁰⁵ Gharo Bhiri,¹⁰⁶ Kot Kori,¹⁰⁷ Jhukar,¹⁰⁸ Lohumjo-daro,¹⁰⁹ Lakhiyo,¹¹⁰ Ali Murad,¹¹¹ Shahjo Kotiro,¹¹² Karchat,¹¹³ Mohenjodaro¹¹⁴ and Chanhu daro.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, striking similarities in the chert blades of Harappa and Sukkur have been outlined in B. Allchin's¹¹⁶ analysis of the Harappan working floors there; the average width of the thirteen broken blades at Harappa i.e., 1.43 cms is very close to those found on the Rohri hills as, for instance, at Sukkur, where the average centimetre width was 1.40.

Semi-Precious Stones

Two archaeologists have referred to the occurrences of crypto-crystalline silica material in Sind. Walter Fairservis Jr. categorically mentioned that

⁸⁴ B. Allchin, 'Stone Blade Industries of Early Settlements in Sind as Indication of Geographical and Socio-economic change', in M. Taddei ed., *op. cit.*, 1979, p. 181-83.

⁸⁵ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁹⁸ F.A. Khan, 'Excavations at Kot Diji', *Pakistan Archaeology* 2, 1963, pp. 13-85.

⁹⁹ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁰¹ *Pakistan Archaeology* 1, 1964, p. 44.

¹⁰² *Pakistan Archaeology*, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Pakistan Archaeology* 1, 1964, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁵ *Pakistan Archaeology* 1, 1964, p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ M.R. Mughal, 'Explorations in Southern Sind', *Pakistan Archaeology* 8, 1972, p. 134.

¹⁰⁷ A.R. Khan, 'Kot Kori—A Site of Indus Civilization in the Lower Sind', *Indus Civilization—New Perspectives*, 1981, Islamabad, pp. 43-46.

¹⁰⁸ Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 10-18.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-58.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 137-139.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹¹⁴ J. Marshall, *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Volume II, London, 1931, p. 458.

¹¹⁵ E.J.H. Mackay, *Chanhu-daro Excavations*, Delhi, 1942, pp. 10-11, 230.

¹¹⁶ B. Allchin *op. cit.*, p. 186.

which used, among other shells, *Turbinella pyrum* for artifact manufacture.⁷⁷ The remains include bangles and bangle fragments, implements, wasters and other by-products of shell manufacture.

Coral

Although red or precious coral, *Corallium rubrum*, is gathered mainly from the Mediterranean and its islands, A *Dictionary of The Economic Products of India*, noted the remarks of W.T. Blanford on the presence of coral in Sind:⁷⁸

some miles south of Lohari Lang, and near Murad Khan's 'band' (dam) across the Habb river, a thin bed composed of corals appears a few feet above the base of the Gaj group. This bed can be traced for miles to the south. All the species of coral (five or six) are encrusting forms or small branching kinds. A. *Pachyseris*, or some closely allied form, and two or three species of *Hydnophora*, are specially common.

Blanford also noted a coral zone abounding in several species of coral near Nari.⁷⁹ Watt argued that some of them may have been ornamental types:

it seems probable that in some of the passages already quoted, reference has been made to coral in a generic sense, some of the forms there mentioned being, strictly speaking, members of the series we have designated ornamental in contradistinction to reef-forming.

Protohistoric Tradition: Coral artifacts in a pre-Harappan context have been found at Ali Murad in south Sind.⁸¹

Chert/Flint

Chert/flint is widely available in Sind.⁸² W.T. Blanford also noted the presence of flint similar to that of the Rohri hills, sixteen kilometres west-northwest of Kotri and a dark brown chert throughout most of Sind Kohistan.⁸³ The

⁷⁷ G.F. Dales, 'The Balakot Project: Summary of Four Years Excavations in Pakistan', in M. Taddei, ed., *op. cit.*, 1979, pp. 252-268.

⁷⁸ G. Watt, *Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Volume II, Delhi, first published 1889, reprint 1972, p. 529.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 531.

⁸¹ N.G. Majumdar, *Explorations in Sind, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India: No. 48*, New Delhi, 1934, pp. 113-14.

⁸² E.H. Aitken, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, Karachi, 1909, pp. 26-29.

⁸³ Cited in L. Flam, 'Recent Explorations in Sind: Palaeogeography, Regional Ecology, and Prehistoric Settlement Patterns (ca. 4000-2000 B C)', *Studies in the Archaeology of India and Pakistan*, Delhi, 1986, p. 71.



Attock District: Here, gold is found on the banks of the Indus river.⁷⁰ In the nineteenth century, the right to extract this precious metal was granted yearly to a contractor, the rate in 1884 being Rs. 120. Apart from the Indus, gold was also found in the sands of other streams like the Raish, Sil and Sohan.

Rawalpindi District: In this district, gold is found in the tributaries of the Jhelum and of the Indus.⁷¹ However, it only yielded about Rs. 300 per annum worth of gold in 1883–84.

Jhelum District: Gold occurrences in the old Jhelum district have been noted in the *Gazetteer of the Jhelum District*.⁷²

Here in the tertiary formations of the Salt Range gold is found in the shape of minute scales.... And in the beds of the numerous *nallahs* or *kasis* which flow through the miocene formations, the sand is washed for gold. It seems to be obtained in the largest quantity towards the Indus, north of the Salt Range.

The rivers where alluvial gold is noteworthy are the Bunhar and the Kahari.⁷³ In the Bunhar river small quantities of gold from the sands used to yield an annual revenue of Rs. 225 per annum in 1883–84. The Kahari river contained gold in its junction below Rohtas and Bakrala.

Haematite

In the Salt range, some earth iron haematites were found, although not in commercially viable quantity.⁷⁴

Sind

Shell

The gastropod, *Turbinella pyrum* is found all along the coast of Sind and Baluchistan with its westernmost occurrence at Pasni, on the Makran coast.⁷⁵ Occasional specimens of *Fascolaria trapezium* are noted along the Sind and Makran coasts.⁷⁶

Protohistoric Tradition: Balakot, situated on the Sonmiani bay, in its Harappan level, has provided impressive evidence of a local shell industry

⁷⁰ *Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi District*, Lahore, 1895, p. 21.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Gazetteer of the Jhelum District*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷³ T.H.D. La Touche, *A Bibliography of Indian Geology and Physical Geography with an Annotated Index of Minerals of Economic Value*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 215.

⁷⁴ *Gazetteer of the Jhelum District*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁷⁵ J.M. Kenoyer, 'Shell Working at Moenjo-daro, Pakistan', in J. Schotsmans and M. Taddei eds., *South Asian Archaeology 1983*, Naples, 1985, p. 301.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 306.



palettes and ringstones.⁵⁸ In the period of the Harappan civilisation, the Gomāl valley sites of Gumla,⁵⁹ Rehman Dheri,⁶⁰ Karam Shah,⁶¹ Bud Ki Dheri⁶² and Hathala⁶³ contain chert/flint microliths in their artifactual repertoires.

Copper

Potwar Plateau: Valentine Ball noted in the Salt range, the presence of beds which were called copper shales owing to the presence of small nodules of copper sulphide. These, however, were not of great economic value and Wynne of the Geological Survey of India did not find *in situ* nodules.⁶⁴ R.D. Oldham also noted that 'some traces of copper in the form of small nodules of copper glance have been discovered in these shales, but these concretions are of rare occurrence.'⁶⁵

Protohistoric Tradition: Copper/bronze artifacts, in a pre-Harappan context, have been found in the following pockets: (a) In the Bannu basin, which lies south of the Kohat district, rods, sheeting, a triangle and fragments of copper were found at Lewan,⁶⁶ and fragments at Tarakai Qila;⁶⁷ (b) Sārai Khola, in the Potwar region, yielded bangles, pins, needles, a nail parer, a ring and a spheroid.⁶⁸

Lead

Jhelum District: In the Jhelum district, in two or three localities of the Salt range, sulphur of lead or galena is found in small nodules.⁶⁹ The best quality is said to occur in a place called Mount Karangali. Lead occurrences in the district were chiefly in clefts in the most inaccessible precipices of hills, and 'peasants' in the nineteenth century used to search for it by letting themselves down the face of the precipice and picking out the mineral from the clefts.

Gold

Alluvial gold occurs in various rivers and streams in this region and has been known to be extracted in the past. The occurrences are as follows.

⁵⁸ Allchin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39ff, 61.

⁵⁹ Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 92ff.

⁶⁰ Khan, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Dani, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-102.

⁶⁴ V. Ball, *A Manual of the Geology of India*, Part III, Economic Geology, Calcutta, 1881, p. 266.

⁶⁵ R.D. Oldham, *A Manual of the Geology of India*, Stratigraphical and Structural Geology, Calcutta, 1893, p. 489.

⁶⁶ Allchin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁶⁷ Allchin and Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁶⁸ Halim, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁹ *Gazetteer of the Jhelum District*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

Ordinary Stone

Potwar Plateau: The mineral wealth of this region is basically that of the Salt range in which limestone occurrences are numerous. Waith, while estimating the salt occurrences in the mountains where the Kheura salt mines were located, noticed that the formation there, which was of nummulitic limestone, had an average thickness of 200 feet.⁴⁶ The Sarai Khola excavation report also noted the abundant availability in the area of limestone and slate stones,⁴⁷ while the Taxila report noted the presence of granite, basalt, quartzite, hornblende, sandstone and marble in the Tamra nala.⁴⁸

Jhang District: In this district, which was the northernmost of the four districts of the former Multan division in undivided India, in the Kirana hills, quartzites and slates are found.⁴⁹ In the nineteenth century, there were also several quarries in the hills near Chiniot, where millstones, pestles, mortars and *mochi* blocks etc., were made.⁵⁰

Mianwali District: In this district which was the extreme south-west region of the Rawalpindi division of undivided Punjab, the Dhak range contained soft grey and greenish sandstone and nummulitic limestone.⁵¹

Gomal Plain: According to Farid Khan, some of the limestone of the Mesozoic and tertiary periods contains chert which is brought down in the form of river pebbles by the Gomal and Takwara which drain the Gomal plain.⁵²

Bannu Basin: Sandstone, limestone, granite and quartzite are commonly found in this region.⁵³

Attock District: *Abri*, a lower cretaceous shell limestone of a variegated chocolate and yellow colour, is abundant in this district.⁵⁴

Protohistoric Tradition: A number of the above-mentioned stones were utilised in a pre-Harappan context: (a) In the Potwar region, Sarai Khola has yielded granite celts, limestone chisels, grinding slabs and a macehead, and slatestone chisels;⁵⁵ (b) In the Gomal region, Gumla⁵⁶ and Rehman Dheri⁵⁷ have yielded chert microliths; (c) Lewan in the Bannu basin has yielded sandstone, quartzite and granite artifacts including grinding stones,

⁴⁶ *Gazetteer of the Jhelam District, op. cit.*, pp. 16, 20.

⁴⁷ Halim, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Marshall, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ *Gazetteer of the Jhang District, Lahore, 1884*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Gazetteer of the Mianwali District, Lahore, 1915*, p. 8.

⁵² Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

⁵³ Allchin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ Marshall, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Halim, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-15.

⁵⁶ Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-99.

⁵⁷ Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

Alabaster

Gypsum, from which alabaster was manufactured, occurs in the marl beds above the salt strata of the Salt range.³⁵

Beds of it seem to lie above and below the salt. The mineral is, for the most part, of light grey colour, with shades of blue, and translucent on the edges.

From places like Pind Dadun Khan, Mari and Kalabagh, significant amounts of gypsum could be obtained.

Semi-Precious Stones

Bannu Basin: In the Kurram-Tochi doab, crypto-crystalline silica material such as agate and jasper could be found close to the localities of the pre-Harappan sites or within walking distance.³⁶

Gomal Plain: Many varieties of crypto-crystalline silica such as jasper, chalcedony and agate are found in large areas in north and south Waziristan.³⁷

Potwar Plateau: John Marshall picked up specimens of jasper from the Tamra nala or Haro river in the vicinity of the early historic centre of Taxila.³⁸

Protohistoric Tradition: In a pre-Harappan context, (a) the Bannu basin site of Lewan has yielded agate beads and microliths and jasper microliths;³⁹ (b) the Potwar plateau sites of Sarai Khola⁴⁰ and Jhang⁴¹ have yielded agate beads, a jasper arrowhead, and carnelian beads; (c) the Gomal region sites of Rehman Dheri⁴² and Gumla⁴³ contain carnelian beads, agate beads and microliths, jasper beads, microliths and a core. In the Harappan period also, carnelian, agate and jasper beads, jasper and agate microliths were found in the Gomal valley sites of Rehman Dheri⁴⁴ and Gumla.⁴⁵

³⁵ *Gazetteer of the Jhelam District*, Calcutta, 1883-84, pp. 29-30.

³⁶ Allchin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³⁷ F. Khan, 'A Preliminary Report on the Microlithic Blade Industry from Rahiman Dheri', in M. Taddei ed., *South Asian Archaeology 1977*, Naples, 1979, p. 379.

³⁸ J. Marshall, *Taxila*, Volume 2, Cambridge, 1951, p. 477.

³⁹ Allchin *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 137.

⁴⁰ Halim, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴¹ M.R. Mughal, 'Exploration in Northern Punjab, Campbellpur and Rawalpindi Districts', *Pakistan Archaeology* 8, 1972, p. 132.

⁴² F.A. Durrani, 'Some Early Harappan Sites in Gomal and Bannu Villages', in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta eds., *Frontiers of the Indus Civilization*, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 505-510. Also see Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

⁴³ A.H. Dani, 'Excavations in the Gomal Valley', *Ancient Pakistan* 5, 1970-71, pp. 1-177.

⁴⁴ Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-403.

⁴⁵ Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-88, 101.

been considered, since such data strengthen the possibility of these resources reaching Harappa, in a finished and unfinished form. We have also specified the presence of pre-industrial traditions of raw material exploitation, wherever information on them is available. Logically, it is entirely possible that mineral resource occurrences, on which geological information is presently available, were not known in the pre-modern period. Generally, however, native people are aware of the presence of mineral wealth in their neighbourhood. This has been noted by a number of scholars closely associated with studies of pre-industrial mining and metallurgy, a surmise that is also clearly argued in the following extract from La Touche on the Kashmir region:³¹

I think that I am not far wrong in saying that in very few instances in India have useful minerals been discovered in localities that were unknown to the natives, and in which the ores had not been worked by them at one time or another.... To take a single instance, the Khasis of Assam, who, till the beginning of the present century had hardly felt the influence of Western civilization, have for ages obtained their iron from an ore which occurs as minute grains of magnetite disseminated in the granite of their hills. Many a highly trained European geologist might justly have been sceptical as to the possibility of obtaining a productive iron ore from granite, and would very possibly have passed the rock over as being utterly useless for such a purpose.

Upper Indus Plains and the North West Frontier Province

Steatite

Two steatite bearing localities are mentioned in *India's Mineral Wealth*: (a) at Kangrara in the North West Frontier Province, thirty miles from Abbottabad, where there was significant steatite production till 1948; (b) in the Nowshera tahsil of the Peshawar district, there were old pits in altered Attock shales, near Khund, from where the local inhabitants apparently obtained supplies.³²

Protohistoric Tradition: In a pre-Harappan context, the pattern of distribution is as follows: (a) in the Bannu basin, beads have been found at Lewan and seals at Tarakai Qila;³³ (b) the Potwar plateau site of Sarai Khola has yielded beads.³⁴

³¹ Cited in W.A. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895, p. 61.

³² J. Coggin Brown and A.K. Dey, *India's Mineral Wealth*, London, 1955, p. 529.

³³ F.R. Allchin, B. Allchin, F.A. Durrani, M.F. Khan, *Lewan and the Bannu Basin*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 95-97; F.R. Allchin and J.R. Knox, 'Preliminary Report on the Excavation at Tarakai Qila (1978-79)', in H. Hartel ed., *South Asian Archaeology 1979*, Berlin, 1981, p. 249.

³⁴ M.A. Halim, 'Excavations at Sarai Khola Part-II', *Pakistan Archaeology* 8, 1972, pp. 23-24.

the opinion of Vats, for the casting of metal objects; (g) a shallow earthenware crucible, oval at the base with straight sides.²⁸ Moreover, Table 1 notes the presence of slag in a number of urns.²⁹

Table 1
Contents of Post-Cremation Urns

<i>Urn Number</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Remains</i>
1033B.	Mound F, Trench I, Sq. 1711/16	Slag.
3824	Mound F, G.G. Area, Sq. I 9/3	Bit of slag
3847	Mound F, G.G. Area, Sq. I 8/10	Some slag
5910	Mound AB, Trench Ex. P. I and II, Sq. P 23/10	Some slag
7174	Mound AB, Trench Ex. P. I and II, Sq. M 12/18	Some slag
7854	Mound F, Trench G.G. Area, Sq. M 12/18	Some slag
3905	Mound F, Trench G.G. Area, Sq. J 9/9	Some slag
7867	Mound F, Trench II, Sq. N 9/10	Several pieces of slag
	Mound F, Trench III, Sq. I 12/3	Copper scum, slag
XXXV	Mound AB, Trench S.E. Sq. Q 27/20	Slag pieces
7863	Mound F, Trench G.G. Area, Sq. K 9/3	A lot of slag
10252	Mound F, Trench IV, Sq. I 12/4	Some slag
7840	Mound F, Trench G.G. Area, Sq. I 9/1	A piece of slag

The report also noted the presence of several 'long pieces of slag' in an earthenware jar in Square HG/23.³⁰

Possible Source Areas of Raw Materials

Unlike Sind, where the Kirthar piedmont and its outliers provided some of the basic stones that were used by the Harappan sites of the region, Harappa was located in a sub-region which did not contain any of the minerals and metals exploited at the site within its ambit. The presence of these raw materials outside the Bari doab, but in regions which were either contiguous to it or displayed other cultural contacts with Harappa, is highlighted in this section. We are aware that the mere occurrence of a resource does not necessarily mean that the raw material was collected from there. However, pending a wide application of scientific techniques to solve the problem of ore-artifact correlation, the formulation of the distribution pattern of these raw materials, on the basis of geological reports, gazetteers, nineteenth century travel literature and other publications, in the probable areas which formed a part of the 'contact zone' of Harappa is the only useful method of analysis. The protohistoric pattern of exploitation of such raw materials in the various sub-regions where they naturally occur has also

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 80-90, 126, 150, 151, 182, 470-473.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 254ff.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 27

Semi-Precious Stone: One unbored, barrel-shaped bead of carnelian was noticed at Harappa.¹⁷ Agate beads were also locally manufactured. H.C. Beck in his 'Report on Selected Beads from Harappa' discussed the morphology of some unperforated, circular, long, barrel, agate specimens that were sent to him for examination.¹⁸ Although he felt that they resembled the shape of Mesopotamian weights, the results, when they were weighed, were not sufficiently uniform for these specimens to have been weights. Beck contended that possibly all the specimens were unfinished beads. Apart from the above-mentioned beads, an unfinished barrel-shaped bead of banded agate, in which variety a large number of finished specimens have been found, was recovered from Mound F.¹⁹ Also, a crescent-shaped, unbored and unfinished pendant of banded agate is reported.²⁰ One unfinished cuboid weight in banded agate has also been found.

Ordinary Stone: Local manufacture of chert/flint artifacts is attested to by (a) a large number of cores; (b) two unfinished cubical weights; (c) large unfinished celts; (d) a flake,²² and (e) an unfinished tapering axe.²³ Blocks of sandstone, sometimes with tubular drill holes as in the case of a rectangular, dressed but unpolished block of yellow sandstone, and the fragment of grey stone are other evidences of stone working.²⁴ Weights in sandstone and slate also seem to have been manufactured here—two unfinished grey sandstone weights and one unfinished slate weight are reported.²⁵ A small, unfinished quartzite cone is also reported.²⁶ A square block of hornblende finished on the face and sides but with a rough protuberance on the reverse, was noted at Mount AB.²⁷

Copper: Impressive evidence of copper/bronze working at Harappa is available from the excavation report. This evidence includes (a) a number of cast bars, one of which shows a few hammer marks. These, in the opinion of the excavator, were intended to be hammered out as chisels; (b) unfinished bangle specimens which include one fragmentary, uneven rod which was in the process of being beaten out into a solid bangle, two flat strips which, according to the excavator, were for making hollow bangles and two more flat strips which had only just been beaten out and flattened; (c) lumps of copper and two large, folded sheets of copper; (d) other miscellaneous copper strips intended for either chisels or cobbler's awls; (e) a cylindrical furnace in Mound F in which slag deposits were abundant; (f) sixteen furnaces, located near "workmen's quarters", which, although bereft of any artifactual evidence, in the light of intense firing in some of them, were designed, in

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 399–400.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 114.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 98.

²¹ Ibid., p. 126.

²² Ibid., pp. 36, 39, 60, 104, 112, 159, 192.

²³ Ibid., p. 107.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 141.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 361–362.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 138.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 159.

Contd ...		
Raw Material	Artifacts	
ORDINARY STONE	Chert, weights, scrapers, cores, flakes, arrowhead, burnishers, knives. Sandstone block, statuette, dice, lingams, querns, weights. Limestone tablet, lingam. Flint axe, core. Quartzite cone. Granite weights, pestles, celt, querns. Limestone beads, maceheads, weight, dish. Hornblende pendants, weight, lingam, ball, finial. Jaisalmer stone cap, cone, lingams, rings, inlay, palette. Haematite beads. Sang-i-abri slabs. Basalt querns, pestles, palette, celt. Slate weight. Marble macehead, beads. Calcite bead. Diorite bead	
SEMI-PRECIOUS STONE	Chalcedony ball, lingams, block, beads. Crystal bead. Feldspar beads. Serpentine beads.	

used as guidelines to distribute food in famine ravaged areas. The manuals clearly state the minimum amount of food that must be given as daily subsistence. In grain equivalent, these varied from 2.57 lbs. per adult male per day in Madras to 1.5 lbs. in Bombay; for females it ranged from 2.06 lbs and 1.25 lbs; and for children it was estimated at around 14 oz. to 1 lb. per day.²¹ An average of the lower bounds can, therefore, be treated as *subsistence foodgrain requirement* in the most obvious sense of the term—anything lower would trigger off starvation. The weighted average comes to a little over 1.1 lbs per person per day.

The *Famine Inquiry Commission* appointed P.C. Mahalanobis to estimate the minimum per capita foodgrain consumption, and he arrived at a figure of 17 ounces per day. The Commission, however, believed it to vary from 17 ounces to 15 ounces.²² One possible estimate that can be used is a norm of 1 lb per person per day—the mid-point of the two figures offered by the Commission. The minimum rations prescribed in the Famine Relief Codes, however, tend to suggest that a daily rice equivalent consumption of 1 lb per person is an underestimate. I have, therefore, used another norm as well—that of 1.05 lbs per person per day—which is slightly higher than the *FIC* estimates, but lower than the weighted average obtained from the Famine Codes.

Given the population series and the two estimates of per capita foodgrain equivalent consumption, one can generate the data on aggregate consumption for Bengal. It may be argued that fixing per capita foodgrain consumption over a fairly long period is not a particularly desirable assumption. Ideally, one ought to use 'hard' stock data of the rice traders, or construct some sort of demand function for foodgrain. Unfortunately, there are no figures on stocks, and it is almost impossible to model demand for rice using pre-independence data. But, by pegging consumption at levels lower than those prescribed by the Famine Relief Codes, I am essentially constructing a series on *subsistence consumption which should overstate stocks and minimise the role of FAD*. If anything, my assumptions strengthen the null hypothesis that FAD had little to do with the 1943 famine, against the alternate hypothesis that it did.

To compute stock estimates, one needs to have a cut-off year that has zero opening stocks. I have chosen 1929 on two grounds. First, 1927 and 1928 were years of relatively poor harvests, and stocks should have dwindled to zero by the beginning of 1929. Second, a fifteen year time lag is long enough to prevent data distortions for the relevant year, 1943. I have made one more allowance. To estimate the closing stock of rice, I have assumed that 5 per cent was lost every year to rodents, moisture, and rot.

²¹ Government of Madras, *The Famine Code: Madras Presidency* (Madras 1927), p. 37, and Government of Bombay, *Famine Relief Code: Bombay Presidency* (Poona 1927), p. 22.

²² *FIC* (1945), p. 204.

In the 1980s, with better storage facilities, more than 3 per cent of India's grain stock was lost annually to rats and water seepage. Therefore, a 5 per cent write-off seems reasonable for the 1930s and 1940s.²³

In the definitions that follow, the variables ending with 1 denote calendar year estimates, and those with 2 are for the period September to August. Testing the FAD hypothesis is quite simple. If the stock adjusted rice available in 1943 was greater than in 1941, then rice availability decline (RAD) must stand rejected as the prime explanator of the famine. However, if it is the other way around, then RAD might have been more important than what Sen believed. The results are given in Tables 3, 4, and 5 below.²⁴

Table 2
Data and Series Definitions

<i>Series</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Construction</i>
WRICE	Output of winter rice, 000 tons	
ARICE	Output of autumn rice, 000 tons	
SRICE	Output of summer rice, 000 tons	
NETIM	Net import of rice, 000 tons	
SEEDS	Rice kept aside for seed, 000 tons	
POPBN	Population of Bengal, 000, rate of growth 1.18% p.a.	
ORICE1	Rice output, calendar year	$WRICE_{(t-1)} + ARICE_{(t)} + SRICE_{(t)}$
ORICE2	Rice output, Sep-Aug	$WRICE_{(t-1)} + ARICE_{(t-1)} + SRICE_{(t)}$
CSUP1	Current supply of rice, w/o stock adjustment, calendar year	$ORICE1_{(t)} + NETIM_{(t)} - SEED_{(t)}$
CSUP2	Same as CSUP1, but for Sep-Aug	$ORICE2_{(t)} + NETIM_{(t)} - SEED_{(t)}$
CRICE	Consumption of rice @ 1 lb per capita, 000 tons	$[(POPBN*366)/2240000]$ for 1932, 1936, 1940, and $[(POPBN*365)/2240000]$ otherwise
CON105	Consumption of rice @ 1.05 lbs 000 tons	$[(POPBN*1.05*366)/2240000]$ for 1932, 1936, 1940, and $[(POPBN*1.05*365)/2240000]$ otherwise.
STOCK1	Closing stock of rice, calendar year	1929: $(CSUP1 - CRICE) * 0.95$. 1930-43: $[STOCK1_{(t-1)} + CSUP1_{(t)} - CRICE_{(t)}] * 0.95$
STOCK2	Closing stock of rice, Sep-Aug	1929: $(CSUP2 - CRICE) * 0.95$. 1930-43: $[STOCK2_{(t-1)} + CSUP2_{(t)} - CRICE_{(t)}] * 0.95$
ST1051	Closing stock of rice, calendar year, using CON105	Same as STOCK1 except that consumption factor is CON105

²³ In fact, it has been suggested by a referee that the cost of storing rice increases very rapidly after the first year. Presumably, this is because of growing risk of pest damage and rot. Therefore, if anything, the constant loss assumption should overstate stocks and underplay FAD, which is what I want.

²⁴ The entire data set is given in the appendix.

Table 2 (Contd.)

Series	Definition	Construction
ST1052	Closing stock of rice, Sep-Aug, using CON105	Same as STOCK2 except that consumption factor is CON105
SUPR1	Stock adjusted rice supply, calendar year	$STOCK1_{(t-1)} + CSUP1$
SUPR2	Stock adjusted rice supply, Sep-Aug	$STOCK2_{(t-1)} + CSUP2$
SU1051	Stock adjusted supply of rice, calendar year, using consumption factor of 1.05 lbs	$ST1051_{(t-1)} + CSUP1$
SU1052	Stock adjusted supply of rice, Sep-Aug, using consumption factor of 1.05 lbs	$ST1052_{(t-1)} + CSUP2$

Note: * Indicated 'multiplied by' in this Table.

Table 3

Stock Adjusted Availability of Rice, 1929-1943 Calendar Years

	ORICEI	CSUPI	CRICE	STOCKI	SUPRI	PCARI	MAPCARI
1929	9912	9251	8070.45	1121.52	na	na	na
1930	9320	8572	8165.68	1451.45	9693.52	0.1934	na
1931	9940	9500	8262.04	2554.94	10951.45	0.2160	na
1932	10184	9505	8382.43	3493.64	12059.94	0.2351	0.2148
1933	10802	10336	8458.17	5102.89	13829.64	0.2664	0.2392
1934	9513	9502	8557.98	5744.57	14604.89	0.2781	0.2599
1935	9690	9416	8658.96	6176.53	15160.57	0.2853	0.2766
1936	8096	7803	8785.14	4934.67	13979.53	0.2600	0.2745
1937	11403	10772	8864.52	6500.04	15706.67	0.2887	0.2780
1938	9848	9535	8969.12	6712.62	16035.04	0.2913	0.2800
1939	9114	9151	9074.96	6449.23	15863.62	0.2848	0.2883
1940	9534	9452	9207.20	6359.33	15901.23	0.2822	0.2841
1941	7631	7472	9290.39	4313.89	13831.33	0.2426	0.2699
1942	10776	10307	9400.02	4959.78	14620.90	0.2534	0.2594
1943	8632	8359	9510.94	3617.53	13318.84	0.2282	0.2414

Note: PCAR1 is per capita availability of rice, which is SUPR1 divided by the population (POPBN). All data barring PCAR1 is in 000 tons of 2240 lbs. PCAR1 is in tons. MAPCARI is a three year moving average of PCAR1 ending with the given year.

Table 4

Rice availability, 1929 to 1943, September–August

	ORIGE2	CSUP2	CRICE	STOCK2	SUPR2	PCAR2	MAPCAR2
1929	10398	9737	8070.45	1583.22	na	na	na
1930	8845	8097	8165.68	1438.81	9680.22	0.1932	na
1931	9864	9424	8262.04	2470.74	10862.81	0.2142	na
1932	10168	9489	8382.43	3398.44	11959.74	0.2331	0.2135
1933	10572	10106	8458.17	4793.96	13504.44	0.2602	0.2358
1934	9925	9914	8557.98	5842.48	14707.96	0.2800	0.2578
1935	9517	9243	8658.96	6105.19	15085.48	0.2839	0.2747
1936	8208	7915	8785.14	4973.30	14020.19	0.2608	0.2749
1937	11343	10712	8864.52	6479.74	15685.30	0.2883	0.2777
1938	10408	10095	8969.12	7225.34	16574.74	0.3011	0.2834
1939	8759	8796	9074.96	6599.07	16021.34	0.2877	0.2924
1940	9767	9685	9207.20	6723.02	16284.06	0.2890	0.2926
1941	6906	6747	9290.39	3970.65	13470.02	0.2363	0.2710
1942	11332	10863	9400.02	5162.04	14833.65	0.2571	0.2608
1943	7936	7663	9510.94	3148.34	12825.04	0.2197	0.2377

Note: As before, PCAR2 is per capita availability of rice, after correcting for stocks for September–August. MAPCAR2 is the three year moving average of PCAR2.

Table 5

Rice Availability, 1929 to 1943, Using Consumption of 1.05 lbs

	CON105	ST1051	ST1052	SU1051	SU1052	PC1051	PC1052
1929	8474.0	738.2	1199.9	na	na	na	na
1930	8574.0	699.4	686.8	9310.2	9296.9	0.1858	0.1855
1931	8675.1	1448.1	1363.8	10199.4	10110.8	0.2012	0.1994
1932	8801.6	2043.9	1948.7	10953.1	10852.9	0.2135	0.2115
1933	8881.1	3323.9	3015.0	12379.9	12054.7	0.2385	0.2322
1934	8985.9	3648.0	3745.9	12825.9	12929.0	0.2442	0.2462
1935	9091.9	3773.5	3702.2	13064.0	12988.9	0.2458	0.2444
1936	9224.4	2234.5	2273.1	11576.5	11617.2	0.2153	0.2161
1937	9307.7	3513.8	3493.5	13006.5	12985.1	0.2391	0.2387
1938	9417.6	3449.7	3962.4	13048.8	13588.5	0.2371	0.2469
1939	9528.7	2918.4	3068.2	12600.7	12758.4	0.2263	0.2291
1940	9667.6	2567.7	2931.4	12370.4	12753.2	0.2195	0.2263
1941	9754.9	270.5	-72.7	10039.7	9678.4	0.1761	0.1698
1942	9870.0	672.1	874.3	10577.5	10790.3	0.1834	0.1870
1943	9986.5	-907.6	-1376.8	9031.1	8537.3	0.1547	0.1463

Note: CON105 = Consumption @ 1.05 lbs per person per day. ST1051 = Closing stock thus derived, calendar year. ST1052 = Closing stock derived for September–August. SU1051 = Stock adjusted rice availability, calendar year. SU1052 = Stock adjusted rice availability, September–August. PC1051 = Per capita rice availability, calendar year, i.e. (SU1051/POPBN). PC1052 = Per capita rice availability, September–August.

The tables show that, after adjusting for stocks, *rice availability in 1943 was quite a bit less than in 1941*. This alone cannot disprove Sen's thesis, for Sen

refers to total foodgrain availability, of which rice is one (although overwhelmingly major) component. For a proper comparison, one should examine rice and wheat availability. According to the data given by the Commission, and utilised by Sen, wheat availability from 1938 to 1943 stood at:

1938	236,000 tons.
1939	191,000 tons.
1940	314,000 tons.
1941	378,000 tons.
1942	173,000 tons.
1943	339,000 tons. ²⁵

Since both net wheat inflow and stock adjusted rice availability were less in 1943 compared to 1941, it follows that adding the wheat data can only strengthen our conclusion. Therefore, according to our estimates, *aggregate as well as per capita food grain availability in 1943 was significantly less than in 1941*. To summarise:

- Using the 1 lb. norm and the calendar year basis, per capita food availability was 6.1 per cent less in 1943 compared to 1941.
- Using the 1 lb. norm and the September–August basis, per capita food availability was 7.1 per cent less in 1943 compared to 1941.
- Using the 1.05 lbs. norm and the calendar year basis, per capita food availability was 12.1 per cent lower in 1943 compared to 1941.
- Using the 1.05 lbs. norm and the September–August basis, per capita food availability was 13.8 per cent lower in 1943 compared to 1941.

Since the per capita food supply was especially low in 1941—depending on the periodisation, it was 13 to 17 per cent less than the average for 1936–40—comparing 1943 with 1941 tends to underplay the food availability decline in the famine year. A more reasonable comparison might be to look at three year moving averages of per capita food supply. Instead of tediously describing all such moving averages, I have reported the two least dramatic ones as the final columns of Tables 3 and 4. They show that the average per capita supply at the end of 1943 was anywhere between 12.3 and 10.6 per cent less than the corresponding average for 1941. For economies existing on the borderline of subsistence, these are sharp declines and are often the stuff that sets off price spirals and famines. Charts 1.A, 1.B and 1.C plot per capita rice and foodgrain availability. They speak for themselves.

To conclude, even after accounting for wheat imports into Bengal, food availability in 1943 was less than in 1941, contradicting Sen's finding that FAD could not have been very important, since food availability was greater in 1943 than in 1941, and there was, of course, no famine in 1941.²⁶

²⁵ Sen, *op. cit.* (1981), Table 6.2, p.61. These are the differences between columns (6) and (5) of the table.

²⁶ Sen, *op. cit.* (1981), p.58.

Chart 1.A: Per Capita Rice Availability 1938 – 1943,
Point Estimates & Three Year Moving Averages

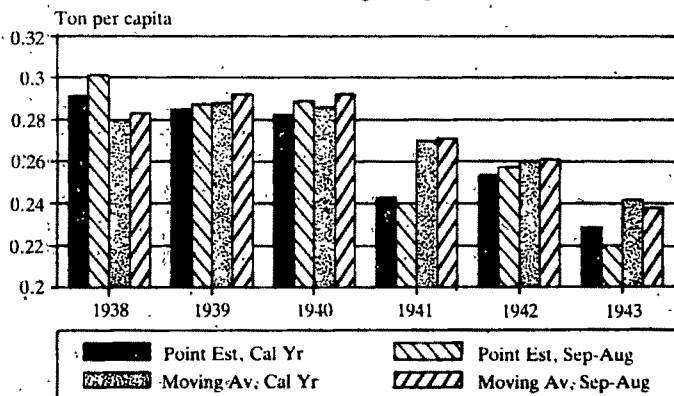


Chart 1.B: Per Capita Rice Availability 1938 – 1943,
Point Estimates & Three Year Moving Averages, Consumption @ 1.05 LBS

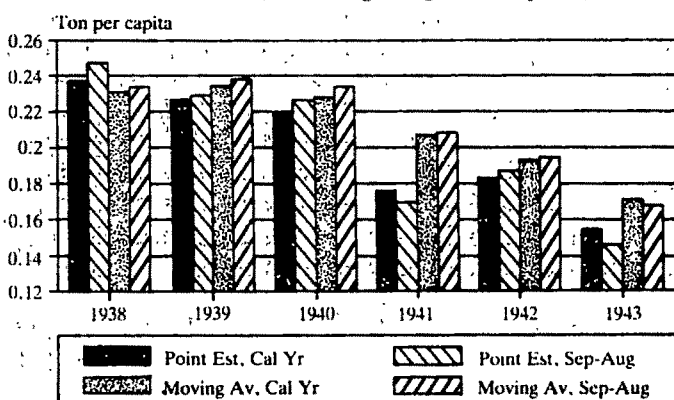
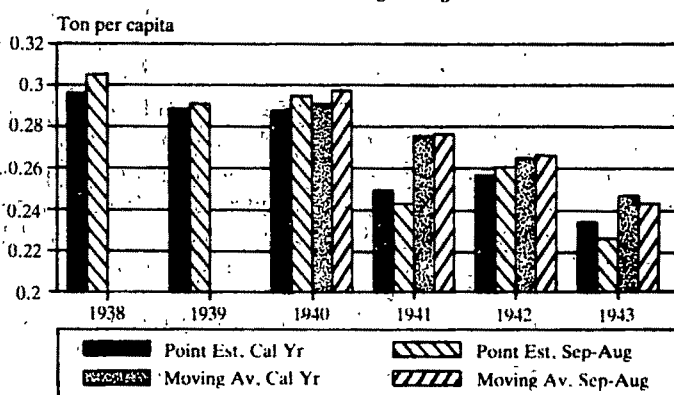


Chart 1.C: Per Capital Rice and Wheat Availability, 1938 – 1943,
Point Estimates and Three Year Moving Averages



V: Conclusions

The findings of this article are not intended to dispute Sen's basic proposition that famines are often characterised by massive exchange entitlement failures, without any significant decline in foodgrain availability. My exercise is more modest. Using the same data set, I have shown that food availability in Bengal in 1943 was worse than in 1941—Sen's comparator year. This does not imply that FAD was the only cause of FEE. However, it certainly implies that one can no longer summarily reject FAD as an explanatory variable.

The results are not surprising. 1941 was preceded by one excellent crop year (1937), one good year (1938), and two normal years (1939 and 1940). As a result, the closing stock in 1940 was quite high, which softened the impact of 1941's severe short crop. If the daily consumption norm of 1.05 lbs. per capita is used, the closing stock of rice in December 1940 was 2.57 million tons, or 27 per cent of the average output during 1938–40. In contrast, the closing stock in December 1942 stood at a paltry 672,000 tons, or 7 per cent of the average crop for 1938–40. Quite simply, the stock was insufficient to tide over the shortfall of 1943.

The Inquiry Commission adopted FAD as the explanation by assuming 'a sharp decline of that mysterious—and unobserved—"carry-over from the previous year."'²⁷ The Commission was definitely guessing, and passing it off as an explanation. In light of the evidence presented here, the Commission may not have been incorrect after all. According to the 1.05 lb norm, per capita rice availability in 1941 and 1943 would have been, respectively, 0.1761 and 0.1547 tons per year (see appendix)—or 1.08 lbs per day in 1941 versus 0.95 lbs per day in 1943. Thus, while the supply in 1941 still allowed for per capita availability to remain above the level of subsistence foodgrain consumption, the supply in 1943 did not—which may play some part in explaining the phenomenal price rise during the famine. Moreover, as Sen points out, most of the foodgrain bought from other provinces (the net import) arrived only during the last quarter of 1943.²⁸ In other words, during the worst period—March–September 1943—the actual food availability was even less than the stock adjusted supplies presented here, which must have further fuelled the price spiral.

Without doubt, food prices soared at a rate much faster than the decline in food availability. It is also true that sharp variations in purchasing power—especially between Calcutta and the rural areas—led to a large scale movement of rice away from the villages, to be stockpiled, hoarded,

²⁷ Sen, *op. cit.*, (1981), p. 83.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

and speculated upon in Calcutta. What happened in 1943 was, indeed, a dramatic failure in exchange entitlement, where people died in the millions because they could not afford to buy rice. I have attempted to establish that such a FEE was also accompanied by a fairly sharp FAD. This does not imply that FAD can be rejuvenated from the ashes and presented as the key to the 1943 famine; merely that its demolition requires heavier artillery.

APPENDIX

The Data

<i>obs</i>	<i>WRICE</i>	<i>ARICE</i>	<i>SRICE</i>	<i>NETIM</i>	<i>SEEDS</i>	<i>ORICEI</i>
1929	7228.0	1457.0	162.0	-250.0	411.0	9912.0
1930	7776.0	1932.0	160.0	-311.0	437.0	9320.0
1931	8008.0	2008.0	156.0	0.0	440.0	9940.0
1932	8350.0	2024.0	152.0	-239.0	440.0	10184.0
1933	7471.0	2254.0	198.0	-31.0	435.0	10802.0
1934	7466.0	1842.0	200.0	414.0	425.0	9513.0
1935	6004.0	2015.0	209.0	150.0	424.0	9690.0
1936	9231.0	1903.0	189.0	155.0	448.0	8096.0
1937	8247.0	1963.0	209.0	-185.0	446.0	11403.0
1938	7155.0	1403.0	198.0	133.0	446.0	9848.0
1939	7815.0	1758.0	201.0	482.0	445.0	9114.0
1940	5178.0	1525.0	194.0	358.0	440.0	9534.0
1941	8876.0	2250.0	203.0	323.0	482.0	7631.0
1942	6024.0	1694.0	206.0	-2.0	467.0	10776.0
1943	na	2390.0	218.0	264.0	537.0	8632.0

WRICE : Output of winter rice, 000 tons.

ARICE : Output of autumn rice, 000 tons.

SRICE : Output of summer rice, 000 tons.

NETIM : Net import of rice, 000 tons.

SEEDS : Rice kept aside for seed, 000 tons.

ORICEI : Output of rice calendar year — $WRICE_{t-1} + ARICE_t + SRICE_t$

<i>obs</i>	<i>ORICE2</i>	<i>CSUP1</i>	<i>CSUP2</i>	<i>CRICE</i>	<i>CON105</i>
1929	10398.0	9251.0	9737.0	8070.5	8474.0
1930	8845.0	8572.0	8097.0	8165.7	8574.0
1931	9864.0	9500.0	9424.0	8262.0	8675.1
1932	10168.0	9505.0	9489.0	8382.4	8801.6
1933	10572.0	10336.0	10106.0	8458.2	8881.1
1934	9925.0	9502.0	9914.0	8558.0	8985.9
1935	9517.0	9416.0	9243.0	8659.0	9091.9
1936	8208.0	7803.0	7915.0	8785.1	9224.4
1937	11343.0	10772.0	10712.0	8864.5	9307.7
1938	10408.0	9535.0	10095.0	8969.1	9417.6
1939	8759.0	9151.0	8796.0	9075.0	9528.7
1940	9767.0	9452.0	9685.0	9207.2	9667.6
1941	6906.0	7472.0	6747.0	9290.4	9754.9
1942	11332.0	10307.0	10863.0	9400.0	9870.0
1943	7936.0	8359.0	7663.0	9510.9	9986.5

ORICE2 : Output of rice September-August — $WRICE_{t-1} + ARICE_{t-1} + SRICE_t$

CSUP1 : Current supply, including NETIM and SEED, calendar year.

CSUP2 : Current supply, September-August.

CRICE : Consumption of rice, @ 1 lb per person per day, 000 tons.

CON105 : Consumption of rice, @ 1.05 lbs per person per day, 000 tons.

<i>obs</i>	<i>STOCK1</i>	<i>STOCK2</i>	<i>SUPR1</i>	<i>SUPR2</i>
1929	1121.5	1583.2	na	na
1930	1451.4	1438.8	9693.5	9680.2
1931	2554.9	2470.7	10951.4	10862.0
1932	3493.6	3398.4	12059.9	11959.7
1933	5102.9	4794.0	13829.6	13504.4
1934	5744.6	5842.5	14604.9	14708.0
1935	6176.5	6105.2	15160.6	15085.5
1936	4934.7	4973.3	13979.5	14020.2
1937	6500.0	6479.7	15706.7	15685.3
1938	6712.6	7225.3	16035.0	16574.7
1939	6449.2	6599.1	15863.6	16021.3
1940	6359.3	6723.0	15901.2	16284.1
1941	4313.9	3970.7	13831.3	13470.0
1942	4959.8	5162.0	14620.9	14833.7
1943	3617.5	3148.3	13318.8	12825.0

STOCK1 : End of year stock of rice, calendar year, using 1 lb norm, 000 tons.

STOCK2 : Stock of rice at end of August, using 1 lb norm, 000 tons.

SUPR1 : Supply of rice after adjusting for STOCK1_{t-1}

SUPR2 : Supply of rice after adjusting for STOCK2_{t-1}

<i>obs</i>	<i>ST1051</i>	<i>ST1052</i>	<i>SU1051</i>	<i>SU1052</i>
1929	738.2	1199.9	na	na
1930	699.4	686.8	9310.2	9296.9
1931	1448.1	1363.8	10199.4	10110.8
1932	2043.9	1948.7	10953.1	10852.8
1933	3323.9	3015.0	12379.9	12054.7
1934	3648.0	3745.9	12825.9	12929.0
1935	3773.5	3702.2	13064.0	12988.9
1936	2234.5	2273.1	11576.5	11617.2
1937	3513.8	3493.5	13006.5	12985.1
1938	3449.7	3962.4	13048.8	13588.5
1939	2918.4	3068.2	12600.7	12758.4
1940	2567.7	2931.4	12370.4	12753.2
1941	270.5	-72.7	10039.7	9678.4
1942	672.1	874.3	10577.5	10790.3
1943	-907.6	-1376.8	9031.1	8537.3

ST1051 : Closing stock of rice using CON105.

ST1052 : Closing stock of rice using CON105, September-August.

SU1051 : Stock adjusted supply of rice, calendar year.

SU1052 : Stock adjusted supply of rice, September-August.

obs	PCAR1	MAPCAR1	PCAR2	MAPCAR2	PC1051	MAPC1051
1930	0.1934	na	0.1932	na	0.1858	na
1931	0.2160	na	0.2142	na	0.2012	na
1932	0.2351	0.2148	0.2331	0.2135	0.2135	0.2001
1933	0.2664	0.2392	0.2602	0.2358	0.2385	0.2177
1934	0.2781	0.2599	0.2800	0.2578	0.2442	0.2321
1935	0.2853	0.2766	0.2839	0.2747	0.2458	0.2428
1936	0.2600	0.2745	0.2608	0.2749	0.2153	0.2351
1937	0.2887	0.2780	0.2883	0.2777	0.2391	0.2334
1938	0.2913	0.2800	0.3011	0.2834	0.2371	0.2305
1939	0.2848	0.2883	0.2877	0.2924	0.2263	0.2341
1940	0.2822	0.2861	0.2890	0.2926	0.2195	0.2276
1941	0.2426	0.2699	0.2363	0.2710	0.1761	0.2073
1942	0.2534	0.2594	0.2571	0.2608	0.1834	0.1930
1943	0.2282	0.2414	0.2197	0.2377	0.1547	0.1714

PCAR1 : Stock adjusted per capita availability of rice, calendar year.

MAPCAR1 : Moving average (three year) of PCAR1.

PCAR2 : Stock adjusted per capita availability of rice, September-August.

MAPCAR2 : Moving average of PCAR2.

PC1051 : Per capita availability, stock adjusted, using 1.05 lbs, calendar year.

MAPC1051 : Moving average of PC1051.

obs	PC1052	MAPC1052	PCFOOD1	MAPCF1	PCFOOD2	MAPCF2
1930	0.1855	na	na	na	na	na
1931	0.1994	na	na	na	na	na
1932	0.2115	0.1988	na	na	na	na
1933	0.2322	0.2144	na	na	na	na
1934	0.2462	0.2300	na	na	na	na
1935	0.2444	0.2409	na	na	na	na
1936	0.2161	0.2356	na	na	na	na
1937	0.2387	0.2331	na	na	na	na
1938	0.2469	0.2339	0.2956	na	0.3054	na
1939	0.2291	0.2382	0.2883	na	0.2911	na
1940	0.2263	0.2341	0.2873	0.2905	0.2946	0.2970
1941	0.1698	0.2084	0.2492	0.2751	0.2429	0.2762
1942	0.1870	0.1944	0.2564	0.2645	0.2601	0.2659
1943	0.1463	0.1677	0.2340	0.2466	0.2255	0.2429

PC1052 : Stock adjusted per capita availability of rice, using 1.05 lbs, Sep-Aug.

MAPC1052 : Moving average of PC1052.

PCFOOD1 : Stock adjusted per capita availability of rice + wheat, calendar year.

MAPCF1 : Moving average of PCFOOD1.

PCFOOD2 : Stock adjusted per capita availability of rice + wheat, Sep-Aug.

MAPCF2 : Moving average of PCFOOD2.

Some aspects of *begar* in Kashmir in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

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This paper is intended to argue that there has been a great deal more of continuity in the tradition of *begar*¹ (sometimes termed 'corvee')² being exacted in different forms from the people of Kashmir from ancient times up to the recent past than is generally conceded in historiography. Usually, the term *begar* is taken to mean involuntary and unpaid labour. However, the term may also be extended to encompass inadequately paid labour undertaken by the workers under some form of substantial economic pressure and coercion. Similarly, in instances where labour was applied to the processing of a product, *begar* could take the form of obliging workers to obtain a higher quantity of the processed product from the raw material than was actually feasible.

The fact that, during the Sultanate period in Kashmir, *begar* was resorted to with unsparing severity, is indisputable. It has, however, been argued by some historians that the Mughals, particularly Akbar, did away with the practice in Kashmir in its entirety.³ It therefore seems appropriate to examine

¹ The dictionary meaning of *begar* as given by Steingass is 'employing anyone without a remuneration; to force one to work without pay'. It is often thought to have had the same connotation during the Mughal period. Irfan Habib has given a description of various kinds of unpaid labour obtained by the State and its agents from different sections of the Mughal Indian population (For details see *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 150, 167, 239, 248).

² Unpaid labour in medieval Europe is often termed *corvee*. It was demanded in various forms by the State and the landed aristocracy. Earlier, the exaction of unpaid labour was known even under the ancient Roman Empire. However, the distinction between *corvee* and forced labour more generally is that '*Corvee* is a general and periodic short-term obligation; forced labour is usually prescribed for a long or indefinite period' (See, for details, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. VI, New York/London, 1970, pp. 560-561).

³ Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, p. 248; Muhammad Ishaq Khan, 'Some Aspects of *Corvee (Begar)* in Kashmir, AD 833-1858', *Research Biannual*, 1, 2, pp. 58-71; R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 289.

the evidence generally presented to support this contention. The attempt would be made, *inter alia*, to determine the physical characteristics of *begar*, the mode of its exaction, and finally the reliability of the literary and epigraphic evidences available on the subject.

To begin with, the practice of *begar* as a system of obtaining labour, dates from at least the pre-Sultanate period. Kalhana is probably the first and the most reliable source of information on the said period.⁴ He is followed by a host of contemporary chroniclers on the subsequent period beginning with the advent of the Sultanate (AD 1320–1586), and proceeding on through the Mughals (AD 1586–1752) down to the Afghans in Kashmir.⁵

A careful study of these sources reveals that *begar* was extracted from different classes, including carpenters, weavers and other workmen.⁶ It was also obtained from peasants⁷ and boatmen.⁸ Thus, during the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-Din (AD 1356–1374), unremunerative and compulsory labour was demanded from the *hanjis* (boatmen), who were called upon to serve the king for seven days in every month.⁹

The use of *begar* is particularly conspicuous in the history of saffron collection. Besides being asked to fetch wood from a certain distance,¹⁰

⁴ King Samkaravarman (AD 833–902) appears to have transformed *begar* (*Rudhabharodhi*) into a system. He used it for fiscal extortion as well as for transport purposes (Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans., Aurel Stein, Book V, verses 172–176, p. 209, with the relevant footnote). Kalhana refers to thirteen kinds of *begar* in verse 174 of Book V. The villagers who did not comply with the Government's order for carrying loads 'were fined by the value of the latter at enhanced rates, and the same fine was levied the following year a second time from the village as a whole' (Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans., Aurel Stein, Book V, verse 174). Further, according to Kalhana, the *purohit* of a temple once undertook a solemn fast (*parva*) against the carriage of loads (*Rudhabharodhi*) and this earned this group exemption from *begar*. (Ibid., Book VII, verse 1088; see also Book V, note 172–174). In the reign of King Jayasimha the villagers were forced not only to carry the loads but even to participate in the war (Ibid., Book VIII, p. 197, verses 2509–2513 and note). See for further details Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*

⁵ The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (Anonymous); Haider Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*; Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbar Nama*; Muhammad Azam Diddamari, *Tarikh-i-Azmi*; Birbal Kachru, *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*.

⁶ Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III (English trans.; H. Beveridge), reprint Delhi, 1973, p. 1088. Abul Fazl argues that money was taken from these classes. What it was taken for, has not been explained. They may have either been paying the same themselves or may have been forced to pay it for exemption from the obligation of *begar*.

⁷ Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III (Text) Nawal Kishore Edition, p. 776; Beveridge edn., pp. 1087–1088 and p. 1095.

⁸ *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, f. 19a; Haider Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, f. 107a. Also see Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, Delhi, 1974, p. 51.

⁹ Ibid.; none of the accounts, medieval or modern, have stated what the nature of the service rendered might have been.

¹⁰ *Akbar Nama*, Beveridge edn., p. 1088.

carry loads for the army during military expeditions¹¹ and render unpaid services to the State during certain construction projects,¹² the peasants were especially forced to collect saffron from its buds.¹³ To quote the *Ain-i-Akbari*: 'In former times [the Sultanate Period] saffron was collected by compulsory labour; they pressed men daily and made them separate the saffron from the petals and stamens and gave them salt instead of wages.'¹⁴ However, during the reign of Sultan Ghazi Shah Chak (AD 1561-1563) another custom, involving the payment of some wages in order to obtain the labour became common. The workmen were given 'eleven *traks*¹⁵ of saffron flowers, of which one *trak* was given to them as wages; and from the remaining ten they had to furnish two *Akbarshahi sers* of clean dry saffron; that is, for two *Akbarshahi mans* of saffron flowers they had to give two *sers* of cleaned saffron'.¹⁶ The tone of other sections of Abul Fazl's account tends to create the impression that the custom of *begar* assumed cruel proportions under Ghazi Shah Chak. Inevitably, the grandiloquent chronicler has given full credit to his patron, the Mughal emperor Akbar, for putting an end to this hateful practice on his third visit to the Valley in AD 1597.¹⁷

However, the question as to what actually lay behind the discontinuation of such a custom and how its abolition was put into practice, to serve as a relief (or remission) to the people remains unanswered¹⁸ As a form of *begar*, this appears to correspond to the type wherein the wages were inadequate, or where the amount of the finished product demanded from the workers from the raw material was not feasible in practice. In support of the latter contention is the following calculation:

Today, six Kashmiri *sers* (one *trak* yields a net of ten *tolas*, and hence one *ser* yields 1.66 *tolas*.

One *Akbarshahi trak* of eight *sers* may have then yielded $1.66 \times 8 = 13.28$

¹¹ Birbal Kachru, *Majma-ut-Tawarikh*, (MS) Research and Manuscript Division, Srinagar, pp. 220a-b; Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, Urdu translation by Maulvi Muhammad Ibrahim; Haider Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, Vol. II, p. 472.

¹² Birbal Kachru, *op. cit.*, pp. 220a-b; Haider Malik, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, Vol. II, p. 472.

¹³ *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, (Text) Nawal Kishore Edition, p. 776; Beveridge edn., pp. 1087-1088, 1095.

¹⁴ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. and trans., H.F. Blochmann, reprint Delhi, 1965, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵ Eight *Akbarshahi sers* made one *Akbarshahi trak* (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90). But only six Kashmiri *sers* make one Kashmiri *trak* (Mir Izzatullah, *Travels in Central Asia*, English trans., Captain Henderson, p. 4).

¹⁶ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90; *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, (Text) p. 776; Beveridge edn., pp. 1087-1088, 1095.

¹⁷ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90.

¹⁸ Abul Fazl calls the abolition of this custom as a remission (*Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, Beveridge edn., p. 1085).

Akbarshahi tolas. Accordingly, ten *Akbarshahi traks* or two *mans* or eighty *Akbarshahi sers* may have at the most yielded a net amount of only $13.28 \times 10 = 132.80$ *Akbarshahi tolas*.

So quite contrary to the demand of the State for two *sers* (160 *tolas*),¹⁹ the saffron gatherers could have at the most obtained only a little more than one and a half *sers* (132.8 *tolas*). And even if they surrendered their own wages-in-kind (one *trak*),²⁰ still it would have never made up the net quantity as asked for by the pre-Mughal rulers of Kashmir. Quite obviously, it was—besides all else—this predominant factor of the State demand which exceeded production that must have caused great hardship to the peasants and bazar-men.²¹ Akbar, therefore, had every reason to do away with this custom for the good of the people.²² However, Abul Fazl's statement that 'owing to this remission, two *sers* of dried saffron were obtained from seven or eight *traks* instead of from eleven or thirteen formerly',²³ appears to be confusing and contradictory. Because, when the same could not be had from eleven *traks*, how could one gather it from mere seven? This and other similar evidence elsewhere in the *Akbar Nama* could perhaps be interpreted as representative of the chronicler's usual fashion of exaggerating the importance and merits of his patron's administrative acts.²⁴

¹⁹ One Kashmiri *ser* is equal to eighty *tolas*. Two *sers* are, therefore, equal to one hundred and sixty *tolas*. I am compelled to calculate in terms of a Kashmiri *ser* because there are no records available to guide us as to how many *tolas* constituted one *Akbarshahi ser*. Still, one Kashmiri *ser* is lesser in weight than one *Akbarshahi ser*. If one calculates in terms of an *Akbarshahi ser*, then the net output is expected to go down further.

The *tola* is equal to 16 *masha*, each *masha* being equal to 6 *surkhs*. The *surkh* is equal to a *rati* in weight. 97 *surkhs* are equal to 16 *dani*. (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, English trans., H.S. Jarrett, Calcutta, 1949, p. 355 and n).

²⁰ Because if one Kashmiri *trak* of 6 *sers* yields 10 *tolas* of pure saffron, 1 *ser* may yield 10/6 (or 1.66) *tolas*. One *Akbarshahi trak* of 8 *sers* may, accordingly, yield $1.66 \times 8 = 13.28$ *Akbarshahi tolas*. Consequently, eleven *traks* of 88 *sers* may give us a net of $13.28/8 \times 88 = 146.8$ *Akbarshahi tolas*, a net produce, which is still less by 13.2 *tolas* to the net of 160 *tolas* as demanded by the State.

²¹ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90; *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 776; Beveridge edn., pp. 1087–1088 and 1095. The decision of the State to choose the peasants for such a tiresome job was justified on the grounds of their being proficient in the art of picking pure saffron from its flowers. Such peasants may have, in all likelihood, belonged to the area where saffron was grown.

²² *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90.

²³ *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, Beveridge edn., p. 1095.

²⁴ In a bid to claim credit for his royal patron for an increase in the production of saffron in Kashmir, Abul Fazl argues that 'formerly each seed yielded less than three flowers and the amount received by the government' stood in between 7,000 to 20,000 *traks*. 'In Mirza Haider's time [AD 1540] it was...28,000 *traks*. This year when it became *Khalisa*, the ruler's share was 90,000 *traks*. Though there was also more land under cultivation yet the flowers were also more than usual. Every seed yielded eight flowers. (*Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, Beveridge

Besides, other evidence does suggest that Abul Fazl's testimony cannot be regarded as by any means conclusive on the issue of the abolition, and that one should not assume that Akbar's actions led to the cessation of the practice of *begar* in saffron collection as has been so easily concluded by some modern historians.²⁵ In fact, Abul Fazl himself makes no such claim either in the *Ain-i-Akbari* or in any other part of the *Akbar Nama*. What he repeatedly seems to stress upon in the *Akbar Nama* is the unjust and cruel nature of Ghazi Shah's custom wherein force was used for making up the 'deficiency in produce'; he is not so concerned about the use of *begar per se* for the collection of saffron from its petals and stamens. His own words deserve to be quoted here to bring out the nuances:

Fifty five censurable customs were abolished.... The case of the saffron is one of these. The Government share of the produce was divided among the bazar-people and the husbandsmen to be cleaned. Though out of eleven traks, one was given as wages, yet two *sers* of dried saffron.... were exacted....²⁶

At another place, he maintains that;

At that time when the peasants were impressed for this work, and when deficiency (in produce) was punished, two *sers* were obtained from eleven, and occasionally, from thirteen traks....²⁷

Now, we must not, from the act of 'abolition' of the custom, draw the conclusion that the Mughal emperor, for his part, offered considerable wages to the saffron gatherers. Though Abul Fazl is largely silent about the alternate arrangement that was adopted after Ghazi Shah's custom had been done away with,²⁸ yet in the later account of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, one discerns that the emperor continued with the traditional pattern of paying the wages in kind without realizing the need of improving upon the magnitude of wages. Rather he asserts that while during the Sultanate

edn., pp. 996-997). There may be no dispute on the question of the large amount of revenue that flowed in from the emperor's plan of converting the entire saffron land into *Khalisa*. But the fact that each seed 'yielded eight flowers in place of three as formerly' is questionable on the grounds that even nowadays, despite improved fertilizers and modern technology, every seed, at the most, yields six and not eight flowers. Hence, it cannot be presumed, as the above information tends to convey, that the increase in the ruler's share accrued from the introduction of any special kind of technology or manure by the emperor.

²⁵ Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, p. 248; R.K. Parmu, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

²⁶ *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 776; Beveridge edn., pp. 1087-1088.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 785; Beveridge edn., p. 1095.

²⁸ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90.

period, 'a man who cleaned two *pals* ²⁹ of pure saffron received two *pals* of salt³⁰ as wages,³¹ now they received 'half its weight in salt as wages...'³² that is for two *pals* of saffron only one *pal* of salt was given away in wages.

The fact of the inadequacy of wages is even indirectly attested to by epigraphic evidence, which has a certain bearing on one or the other, if not on all, the aspects of *begar*.³³ For instance, it is asserted that Akbar constructed a wall,³⁴ around the Hari Parbat hillock to provide, among other things, labour to thousands of famine-stricken people in Kashmir in AD 1597.³⁵ On its main gate, he had inscribed a verse which states that 'no *begar* was taken from any person and all were paid their wages in cash from the royal treasury.'³⁶ But what remains in question is the magnitude of the wages, and whether such wages were commensurate with the quantum of labour put in.³⁷ The information in this regard is unclear and incomplete. The inscription fails to spell out the difference between the fair and unfair returns; in the absence of which, the real working of *begar* in Kashmir can hardly be determined. Despite this, a modern historian has still ventured to give credit to the Emperor on the grounds that he paid fair returns to the

²⁹ According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, 7 1/2 *pals* make one *ser* (Vol. II. Jarrett, p. 366). However, according to later sources from the first half of the nineteenth century 3 1/3 rupees make a *pal*; hence 22 *pals* = 1 *ser* (Mir Izzatullah, *Travels in Central Asia*, English trans., Captain Henderson, p. 4).

³⁰ The limited money-economy together with the peasant's lack of purchasing power must have been the supreme consideration to guide the State in matters of paying the wages of labour in commodities like saffron and salt. Quite connected with it was the fact that salt was an essential item of daily consumption (Mu'tamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri*, Urdu trans., Muhammad Zakaria Mayil, Lucknow 1974, p. 157). It was, however, not produced in the Valley (and it is probably for this reason that Jahangir misleadingly states that 'there is no salt in the beauties of Kashmir'). Hence, it had to be imported into the Valley (Ibid.,) by a variety of often complex routes (Lahori, *Badshah Nama*, ed., Kabir-Al-Din Ahmad and Abd-al-Rahim, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1868, p. 169; Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. II, Urdu, trans., Mahmud Ahmad Farooqi, Karachi, 1963, p. 192; Sadiq Khan, *Tarikh-i-Shahjahan-wa-Aurangzeb*, Br. Mus. Or. 1671, f. 60 b).

³¹ *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann edn., p. 90.

³² *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English trans., Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, Vol. II, reprint Delhi, 1968, p. 178.

³³ Kathi Darwaza Inscription, Srinagar.

³⁴ Suka says that since there were regular clashes between the soldiery and the civilians, this wall was constructed to keep them apart. The king's soldiers were now quartered separately in the new town fenced by the above wall (*Kings of Kashmir*, Eng. trans., J.C. Dutt, p. 426). Lawrence holds that construction of the wall commenced to attract the Kashmiris back to Kashmir whence they had fled in the troublesome times of the Chaks (*The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 194).

³⁵ *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 776; Beveridge edn., p. 1087.

³⁶ Kathi Darwaza Inscription, Srinagar.

³⁷ The phenomenon of the underpayment of wages is usually not referred to as a form of *begar*. However, I am personally inclined to opine that even under-payment of wages was one of the forms of *begar*.

labourers, a statement nowhere borne out by the inscription.³⁸ While admitting that the labour seems to have been voluntary and paid for in this instance, one may still surmise that it may have been underpaid. This idea is lent credence to by the curious 'revival' of *begar* with the death of Akbar,³⁹ and the fact that Shahjahan, during his own rule, felt the need explicitly to direct his officials to pay 'suitable wages' to the labourers.⁴⁰ It is also possible that in 1597, the economic depression that resulted from the devastating famine forced labour to work at very low wages even without explicit compulsion.⁴¹

Further, it is not clear how much importance one should give to the mere fact that such an inscription was carved.⁴² For one must also bear in mind that the inscription was carved out at the instance of the State; hence, it represented the will of the employer more than that of the employee. Had a collective body of the labourers themselves come out with such an inscription incorporating their affirmation that 'no *begar* was taken from us and all were paid sufficiently', it would appear more credible; it would even automatically imply the acknowledgement of the State's gesture by the very class of the labour which was hit the most and which the State now claimed was relieved of the extortionate practice of *begar*.

Let us now turn to the situation in Kashmir in the reign of Akbar's immediate successor, his son Jahangir. It would appear that in his reign, the element of force re-emerges in an explicit form, while on the other hand there is no improvement in the wages paid. The latter of the two conditions is frankly admitted by Jahangir himself. Thus, he writes in around the fifteenth year of his reign:

...it is an established custom that they bring the saffron flowers plucked and according to the plan they have adopted from of old, they take half its salt in wages....⁴³

It is also fairly clear that on account of the unremunerative nature of the task, there was always a certain resistance on the part of the workers to the demand.⁴⁴ It is for this reason that Itiqad Khan, when he took over as

³⁸ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

³⁹ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, English trans., Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, Vol. II, reprint Delhi, 1968, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Inscription Jamia Masjid, Srinagar.

⁴¹ The famine of AD 1597 is too familiar a phenomenon to need any introduction. The people then suffered for want of food and they even agreed to change their religion for a mere piece of bread. (See for details, Letters of Jerome Xavier, trans., H. Hosten, *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XXIII, No. 1, 1927, pp. 115-120).

⁴² *Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, 3,2, p. 198.

⁴³ *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Eng. trans., Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge Vol. II, reprint Delhi, 1968, p. 178.

⁴⁴ The job is very delicate and requires continuous concentration.

Governor of Kashmir (a post he retained from 1622 to 1632) in the seventeenth year of Jahangir's reign, was left with no alternative but to use considerable force. Mu'tamid Khan emphatically maintains 'people were continuously pressed to take raw flowers to their homes, so that they pick up pure saffron as per the wages traditionally fixed. For the wages, they were being given a little salt.'⁴⁵ While we may see this as in part a local excess, resulting from Itiqad Khan's unscrupulous behaviour,⁴⁶ we may also blame it, in part, on Jahangir's rather lax control over his underlings.⁴⁷

By the time Shahjahan (AD 1627-1657) ascended the throne, *begar*, in all its essentials, was still in vogue. However, he was too intelligent to ignore the difficulties in its operation and too cautious to follow such a policy, particularly in the face of the extreme unwillingness shown by the workers in the matter of saffron collection. He therefore issued a *farman*, which he had inscribed on the main gate of the Great Mosque in the locality of Srinagar.⁴⁸ The *farman* prohibits the levy of burdensome customs and taxes, as had been done by some former *subadars*. While seeking to redress many popular grievances, the *farman* enjoined that '...no man shall by any means be forced to collect saffron; and as regards the saffron grown on the *Khalisa* lands, labourers employed be satisfied by payment of considerable wages....'⁴⁹ It is thus evident that the royal edict intended that in Shahjahan's reign the task of saffron collection was not only to be voluntary but was to be paid fairly. Even for the purpose other than this, *begar* was declared inadmissible. This is shown by another *farman* in the sixth year of Shahjahan's

⁴⁵ Mu'tamid Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ He was the most unscrupulous governor of Kashmir. He imposed innumerable taxes on the peasantry and as such, had become most notorious. (Shahnawaz Khan, *Ma'athir-ul-Umara*, Vol. I, ed., Kabir-ud-Din Ahmad, pp. 180-182. English trans., H. Beveridge, *Ma'athir-ul-Umara*, reprint New Delhi, 1979, p. 714). Shahjahan's *farman* is preserved as an inscription on the Jamia Masjid, Srinagar.

⁴⁷ Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 813-818; English trans., pp. 678-679. His officers were engaged in the acts of gathering lucre and hunting for bribes. They paid no attention to the abilities of men or to their performance. Such a deplorable state of affairs paved the way for the decline in revenue.

⁴⁸ The inscription is still extant and catches the sight of the people entering the mosque in the first instance.

⁴⁹ Ibid.; Muhammad Salih Kambu, *Shahjahan Nama or Amal-i-Salih*, Vol. I, edn. Majlis Taraqiya-i-Adab, Lahore 1958, pp. 414-415. However, the continued existence of *begar*, in respect of only a limited portion of land, assigned to the Jagirdars, cannot be ruled out. This is attested to by the very contents of the *farman*, which reads that '...and whatever grows on jagir lands, the assignee shall gather it as he pleases....' Hence, while succumbing to the influence of the nobility, the State still reserved for them the option to get saffron collected by any means, which may have sometimes included the forced collection of saffron. It is a well-known fact that Jagirdars, generally speaking, were bent upon maximisation of exploitation through various means. (For details see, Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*). The extent of the re-assigned land may have been proportionately little, keeping in view the cherished desire of the Mughal emperors to earmark saffron growing land for *Khalisa*. However, due to deficient historical data, it is difficult to determine the extent of such land as was reserved for Jagirs.

reign which points to the exemption from this practice on a portion of land earmarked for the herdsmen somewhere in the Valley.⁵⁰ Whether or not such orders were executed cannot be exactly answered in the absence of any supplementary evidence.

For the period of Aurangzeb we have a solitary reference contained in the travelogue of François Bernier who, while giving a description of the emperor's visit to Kashmir, maintains that 'there are at least fifteen thousand porters (*Qulis*) already collected in Bimber; some sent by the governor of Kachemire and by the neighbouring Rajas, and others who have come voluntarily in the expectation of earning a little money. A royal ordinance fixes their pay at ten crowns for every hundred pounds weight.'⁵¹

The foregoing information seems to suggest two essential features. First, that the labour was voluntary and paid, and secondly that the wages paid were, in all probability, satisfactory, otherwise the labourers would not have volunteered to perform the job of carrying the royal luggage into the Valley through difficult terrain and mountain passes.⁵² The plentiful availability of labour for such tasks explains why the Emperor did not find it necessary to arrange for it beforehand, and could take it for granted.

Owing to the paucity of source material, one cannot conclude unequivocally whether or not *begar* continued in Kashmir during the later Mughal period. At any rate, it can be argued that it is unlikely that Kashmir remained immune to the evil of *begar* in this period, since the weakening of the central Mughal government was likely, if anything, to have strengthened the tendency to demand *begar*.⁵³ Thus, when the Afghans took over from the Mughals (AD 1753–1819), they took the opportunity to impose *begar* without the slightest of reservations. They saw to it that compulsory as well as unpaid labour was extracted from the peasants in order to implement certain projects. Azad Khan (AD 1783–1785), for instance, was the most cruel amongst all the Afghan governors.⁵⁴ He forcibly employed the peasants of the two principal administrative divisions of Maraj and Kamraj for the

⁵⁰ Document, Preservation Research and Manuscript Division, Srinagar.

⁵¹ Bimber is situated at the foot of a steep, black and scorched mountain. In the higher part of the town of Bimber are the remains of the Sarai, a building about three hundred feet square, where the emperor and his personal staff used to camp. (François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, trans., Archibald Constable, reprint New Delhi, 1968, p. 390 and n. 1).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan, *Tazkirat-us-Salatin-i-Chaghtai*, ed., Muzaffar Alam. New Delhi 1980, pp. 100–300; Mirza Bin Rustum writes about this period of Kashmiri history that due to the weak centre, wars were frequent among the *mansabdars* on the issue of naibship (*Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, Vol. II, Part 4, ed., Imtiaz Ali, Rampur, 1973, pp. 31–33). The entire period was covered by a phase of struggle for power among various ethnic groups (See for details, William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, ed., Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Vol. II (1719–1739). Calcutta).

⁵⁴ Ramjoo Dhar portrays his two year reign as a period of naked oppression, and injustice (*Keefyat Intizam-i-Mulk-i-Kashmir*. (MS). Research and Manuscript Division, Srinagar, f. 2a)

construction of a weir (*bund*) at Batwara,⁵⁵ to divert the water of the river Bihat⁵⁶ into a lake,⁵⁷ which he proposed to construct at Maisuma;⁵⁸ thus, the impressed labourers were forced to bring heavy stones and poplar trees over a long distance from Athwajan.⁵⁹ Similarly, the peasants were compelled to carry the provisions on the occasion of Azad Khan's military expeditions to fight the chieftains of Muzaffarabad, Poonch and Kishtwar.⁶⁰ Azad Khan no doubt succeeded in subverting the power of the chieftains of the former two hilly tracts, but it seems that he achieved this at a considerable cost: the peasants, forced on these occasions to abandon their cultivation, had to pay for these campaigns in effect.⁶¹ Their production was, thus, doomed to suffer miserably owing to the lack of weeding, watering and protection against the birds, beasts and pests. Whether all the peasants were pushed into the above obligations can not be fairly answered due to the lack of source material.

To sum up, *begar* meant something more than forced, unpaid labour. In spite of Akbar's measures, all forms of *begar* could not be totally done away with. One of the major forms in which *begar* was revived during the reign of Jahangir was through the under-payment of the wages; hence, in attempting to do away with the custom, Shahjahan insisted on suppressing *unpaid* labour on the one hand, and instructed his officials to pay *fair returns* to the workers, on the other. Shahjahan and even Aurangzeb seem to have temporarily succeeded in rooting out *begar*, though it was probably demanded again during the reign of the later Mughals, and certainly during the period of Afghan rule in Kashmir. Thus, notwithstanding the humane efforts of some rulers, the traces of *begar* were still present in relatively recent periods, even if its precise scope is hard to determine for want of adequate literary or epigraphic evidence. Still, whatever may have been the magnitude and forms of *begar*, it is indisputable that *begar* was not demanded at least in Kashmir for such productive work as the cultivation of fields. It was therefore a form quite distinct from that which obtained in Europe during the age of feudalism.⁶²

⁵⁵ The name of a place in the south of Srinagar city. It falls just on the right bank of the river Jhelum.

⁵⁶ From Vyath or Vitasta, embodiment of Parvati, Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, trans., Aurel Stein, Book I, p. 29, its legendary origin and course above Srinagar. (vide 'Notes on Places in Kashmir', by N.B. Roy in H.S. Jarrett, *op. cit.*, p. 356).

⁵⁷ Birbal Kachru, *op. cit.*, pp. 220 a-b; Haider Malik, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ A *mohalla* again located on the right hand side of the river Jhelum. It is near the modern habitat of Lal Chowk.

⁵⁹ Pir Hasan Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 472; Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ Birbal Kachru, *op. cit.*, pp. 270 a-b; Pir Hasan Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 472; Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 60. These were the tributary states of the *subadar* of Kashmir during and after the Mughal rule in Kashmir (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-139. *Ma'athir-ul-Umara*, *op. cit.*, pp. 488-490; Birbal Kachru, *op. cit.*, ff. 226 a-b).

⁶¹ Muhammad Ishaq Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁶² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *op. cit.*

Naive anthropology in the reconstruction of Indo-Greek history

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All historical reconstructions are based upon a certain number of major themes which give them their unity. The latter derive from the historian's period, environment and personality so that the past is always reconstructed through the prism of the present. These themes constitute what we will call the historian's 'naïve anthropology' or, if preferred, his spontaneous representation of the world.

We shall examine here the influence of 'naïve anthropology' on the reconstruction of the history of the Indo-Greek kingdoms.

The kingdoms that are called 'Indo-Greek' are those that were established after the passage of Alexander the Great up to the first century B.C. in the region that now includes Afghanistan, Pakistan and the North-West of India. Their history has been reconstructed mainly through coins discovered since the end of the seventeenth century.

The two foremost authors on the subject are W.W. Tarn, an Englishman who published *The Greeks in Bactria and India* in 1938 (reprinted with addenda in 1951, 1980 and 1984) and A.K. Narain, an Indian whose work *The Indo-Greeks* was published in 1957 (reprinted 1980).¹

In a recent study,² we showed the extent of the divergences between these two reconstructions even though they are based on more or less identical sources. Analysing the reasoning of these two historians by the 'logician' method,³ we were able to show how feeble were the 'logical' constraints that oriented them towards one conclusion rather than another and how free was the game of historical reconstruction.

The motivations that nevertheless determined the choices of our historians

¹ We refer to the Indian editions of 1980 (Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi) for Tarn and 1980 (Oxford University Press, Delhi) for Narain.

² O. Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings in Archaeology. The case of Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek Numismatics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1990.

³ See J.C. Gardin, *Archaeological Constructs. An aspect of theoretical archaeology*, Cambridge, 1980.

Author's Note: I am grateful to Mrs. V. Gravier for translating this article from the French.

remained to be examined. The present contribution allows us to do so. It is clear that its true meaning is as a follow-up to the study mentioned above that the reader is kindly being referred to.

It is not difficult to imagine how the spontaneous representations of the world of Tarn and Narain differ from each other. At the end of the thirties, the British Raj was living its last years. The British had conceded to the Indians the progressive heading towards 'self-responsible government' but were still dreaming of retaining India within a 'partnership' (the word was popularised by Chamberlain) alongside England under the authority of the Crown. One knows the outcome: India became independent in 1947.

Our thesis is that, by and large, Tarn, the Englishman, represented a moribund and an already nostalgic imperialism while Narain, the Indian, personified in 1957 a freshly victorious nationalism. We hope to show how this opposition, reduced to a few large antithetical themes, explains both the differences between the two reconstructions and the internal coherence of each one.

Hellenocentrism vs. Indocentrism

A point common to Tarn and Narain is that they both liken ancient Greeks to the British in India thus projecting, from the start, the present into the past.

Thus Tarn writes (p. 412): 'the most important fact in the history of the Greek East is that something not very unlike the modern struggle between *nationalism* and *cooperation* (italics mine) was fought out two thousand years ago under the shadow of the Hindu Kuch'. This observation is to be found at the end of the book as if it was a conclusion whereas it is the beginning hypothesis on which Tarn bases his reconstruction. As M.J. Dhondt writes: 'it is clear that the historian having studied the data, *comes fatally to a conclusion* (italics mine) in one way or another, and it is especially clear that once the conclusion is reached, he will organise the data according to the conclusion.'⁴

Tarn compares the portrait of Eucratides, the Indo-Greek king, to that of a British officer wearing a tropical helmet (p. 209). Elsewhere still (p. 408), he notes that the prince of Hunza who holds a British title claims to be a descendant of Alexander the Great. Both empires are thus connected....

If Narain retains the assimilation: Greeks=Englishmen, his point of view is however radically different: from being Hellenocentric it becomes 'Indocentric'.

The titles of the works are eloquent in this respect. *The Greeks in Bactria and India* focuses the attention on the Greeks whereas Narain's title:

⁴ M.J. Dhondt, 'Histoire et reconstitution du passé', p. 90, in Ch. Perelman, *Raisonnements et démarches de l'historien*, Bruxelles, 1963.

The Indo-Greeks leads us to predict a fusion between the two peoples (or an absorption of one by the other) with the advantage given to India named first (cf. the nuance between 'franco-indien' and Indo-French').⁵

These orientations are stated by both authors from the start. In his preface (p. 20), Tarn writes: 'In the history of India the episode of Greek rule has no meaning; it is really part of the history of Hellenism and that is where its meaning resides'. According to him, the Indo-Greek kingdom must be considered as one of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the same way as those which are traditionally recognised: Seleucid, Ptolemaic, Antigonid and Attalid. To which Narain answers, word for word (p. 11): 'Their history (of the Greeks) is part of the history of India and not of the Hellenistic states; they came, they saw, but India conquered'. The backgrounds are drawn....

One Empire vs. Several Kingdoms

From the nineteenth century onwards, European historiography constructed empires (for example, the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian empires).⁶ These empires (a) are large, their aim being to gather together all peoples up to the boundaries of barbarism, (b) are governed by dynasties of emperors whose function is to maintain justice and peace.

As far as the size of the Indo-Greek territory is concerned, Tarn and Narain are in total disagreement. Tarn imagines it immense and has it encroach upon the soil of India up to Patna towards the East and Baroda towards the South. Refuting Tarn's demonstration, Narain stops the advance of the Greeks at the Ravi river which today is a part of the Indo-Pakistan border. In other words, according to Narain, no Greek ever reigned on a foot of what has become, since 1947, the territory of the Indian Republic.

As for dynastic legitimacy, a recurrent theme of British imperialism, our two authors diverge. If they somewhat agree to distinguish four families of Indo-Greek kings (the descendants of Diodotus, Euthydemus, Eucratides and Menander) they differ about the relationships that would have existed between these dynasties.

Tarn manages to have them all related through marriages that history would have failed to remember. Furthermore, he unites them all to the Seleucid dynasty by marrying their common ancestor, Diodotus, to a daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus II. Finally, he proposes to relate—no less—the Mauryas to the Seleucids claiming that Ashoka would have been the grandson of a Seleucid princess. This would have been enough to justify the Greek claim to the throne of India.

⁵ We adopt here the term 'Indo-Greek' for the sake of convenience but without any prejudgement.

⁶ P. Chaunu, 'Empires déments, empires avortés', p. 132, in J.P. Charnay, *Le bonheur par l'empire ou le rêve d'Alexandre*, Paris, 1982.

Narain contests these relationships, agreeing at the most on links between the house of Eucratides on the one hand and that of Diodotus or Euthydemus on the other. For him, the founders of these dynasties were mere 'usurpers'.

The logic of his relationship system leads Tarn to think of the Indo-Greek kingdom (he speaks of an 'empire') as a unit centralised around the king. He would have delegated his authority to 'joint-kings', 'associate-kings', 'sub-kings' (Tarn even speaks of 'viceroy') and would have relied on a mixed army and existing 'native organisations'. Like the British, the Greeks in India would have felt that their numerical inferiority vis-à-vis the Indian masses was a handicap which forced them to place their trust in natives for the army and administration. The lack of 'settlers' is one of the recurrent themes of British imperialists.

Contrary to Tarn, Narain imagines the Indo-Greeks as being divided up into a rather loose conglomerate of small kingdoms somewhat resembling the Maharajas' principalities.

Conquest vs. Invasion

A mythology of the conqueror, based upon the tales of the first historiographers of Alexander the Great, revitalised the imperialistic and romantic Europe of the nineteenth century: the conqueror (a) is a visionary with an irresistible willpower, (b) is invested with a civilising mission. The negative figure of the invader is set in contrast to the positive character of the conqueror.

According to Tarn, the Indo-Greek king Demetrius took Alexander the Great as a model '(who) had reached the summit of human greatness' (p. 131) but who, cut down in the prime of life, could not carry out his 'dream of a union of peoples in a human brotherhood' (p. 181). It is to him that Tarn attributes the conquest of the immense empire up to Patna and Baroda, the outcome of an extremely ambitious plan ('far reaching plan', p. 183). According to his own words, the period was 'an age of giants'. And he concludes (p. 266) that Demetrius is 'so well fitted to be a *hero of romance*' (italics mine).

'We already know Narain's opinion concerning the reach of the Indo-Greek territory. For him, the tradition of Demetrius's large conquest in India is based entirely upon 'a concatenation of slender threads of evidence' (p. 44).

With Tarn, one has the impression that the conqueror advances in a sort of no man's land which offers no resistance. Tarn insists upon the fact that there was no Indian 'nation' (pp. 129, 169, 267), a theme that British imperialists used, to justify their conquests.

On the other hand, Narain recalls the existence of strong neighbours, the

Parthians of Iran and the Mauryas of India with whom one probably had to reckon. Furthermore, he insists on the resistance of the local populations against the advance of the Greeks. He evokes the difficulties that Alexander met within these regions. 'India had already shown signs of vigour in her resistance to Alexander' (p. 8). According to him, even the Greeks settled by Alexander in Bactria did not help the new Indo-Greek invaders because they were already 'indigenised' (this theme of the absorption of the settlers by the colonised people is found again and again in Narain's work) and because they felt closer to the local populations than to their Greek cousins from far away.

The romantic conqueror dreams of a union of peoples, of justice and peace. Thus, according to Tarn, Demetrius would have tried to establish a 'partnership' between Greeks and Indians (p. 181). This word occurs often in Tarn's work. He indicates precisely how to understand the term: a 'partnership' in which 'doubtless the Greeks hoped to be the predominant partner' (p. 260). All that the British could still hope for in India at the end of the thirties....

According to Tarn (p. 180), 'to parts of India, perhaps to large parts, they (the Greeks) came not as conquerors but as friends and saviours'. He adds that the Indian transcription of the name 'Demetrius' is 'Dharmamita' which means 'King of Justice!' Challenging this identification, Narain scoffs (p. 40): 'he (Tarn) imagines that Demetrius appeared to the Indians not as a foreign conqueror but as a king of justice!'.

If Narain recognises a hero among the Indo-Greek kings, it is not Demetrius but Menander who, according to him, became a Buddhist. 'Surely he was the greatest of the Indo-Greek kings of India' (p. 100).

Segregation vs. Indigenisation

How are the relationships between Greeks and the local populations perceived? Tarn models them on what was happening in the Indian Empire. The British were obsessed about the purity of the 'race', all the more so since they were excessively inferior in number when compared to the Indians. Tarn also imagines that the Greeks and Indians lived isolated from each other. Thus he notes 'it must be emphasised that the Greeks were not in India for the purpose of hellenising Indians' (p. 376). As for the things that Indians borrowed from the Greeks, they are but 'a matter of external form but very rarely of substance' (p. 378). For Tarn, orientalisation is synonymous with decadence (both words are associated p. 42). It must be understood that 'partnership' does not imply fusion of peoples. The dream of Alexander is far removed

We will examine three points: mixed marriages, granting citizenship to Indians and conversion of Greeks to Buddhism.

A - Were there mixed marriages ?

Tarn devotes three pages to the study of this question both among the Seleucids and the Indo-Greeks. He does not believe in the existence of mixed marriages in the third and second centuries BC. On the other hand, the practice would have spread from the 1st century BC onwards, and is one of the causes of Greek decadence in Asia (pp. 34-35). His opinion on the subject is summarised in three points:

1. In spite of Alexander's example, Greeks were not naturally inclined towards mixed marriages: 'though Greeks had not the faintest objection to any kind of mixed marriage in itself, they had a great deal of pride in their Greekhood, and efforts to keep that Greekhood intact both in blood and civilisation can be traced ...' (p. 37).
2. If the partner is an Asian, the mixed marriage is less tragic: 'When we talk of the unfortunate consequences of mixed marriages as they affect the children, we are usually thinking of the mating of European with some totally different stock, for example the negro. Such a thing did not, and could not, come within the purview of the Greeks in the Middle East: intermarriage between Greeks and the Asiatic peoples there had much more resemblance to intermarriage between members of two European peoples today' (p. 35).
3. When it is the father who belongs to a higher civilisation, the problem is less serious: 'When the father is of a higher civilisation than the mother, the children are apt to follow his language and civilisation' (p. 36).

The most insidious thing, according to Tarn, is not the mixed marriages which remain rare even during the first century BC, it is the diffuse Indianisation through contact, mostly among the children, 'British children are not brought up in India today, not so much because they cannot be reared (though in some places they may grow up sickly) but because there is a tendency that at this impressionable period, some of their native characteristics may weaken and they may acquire a mentality somewhat nearer akin to that of the Indian, and not the highest type of Indian; continue the process among the Greeks for some generations...it would work like compound interest, and the resulting Indianisation would be obvious' (p. 390).

B - Were there Indian 'citizens' ?

Citizenship is a typically Greek notion. Tarn thinks that Greeks granted it to some Indians. Let us examine the proof of the existence of Indian citizens because it gives us a characteristic example of the way the same fact can give rise to two contradictory interpretations.

In the Buddhist caves of the Bombay region, inscriptions mentioning various benefactors were discovered. Even though their names are typically Indian, these benefactors are referred to as 'Yavanas' (Greeks). How can it be explained? For Tarn, it refers to Indians (since the names are Indian) who were granted Greek citizenship and are therefore called 'Yavanas'. For Narain, it is exactly the contrary: Greeks are being referred to (since they are called 'Yavanas') but they have taken Indian names. Thus it would not have been Hellenised Indians but Indianised Greeks! This is unthinkable for Tarn who wrote (p. 255): 'And this is *common sense* [italics mine] that the conqueror does not adopt the nomenclature of the conquered. Possibly some low-class Greek, broken by circumstances, might occasionally 'go native', a fact which would leave no record, possibly some religious fanatic here or there might desire to be known by a name drawn from his adopted religion; these things happen today, and are part of human nature. But all these 'Yavanas' were men of substance, able to confer large gifts—no doubt wealthy merchants.'

C - Were there Buddhist Greeks?

Tarn recognises that Buddhism could have been attractive to the Greeks. He says that it is probably the only sphere where they were influenced by Indian civilisation. However he minimises this influence. The Greeks who became interested in Buddhism were either 'fanatics' (refer quotation above) or kings, who for political reasons, were playing the Buddhist card against Brahmanism (p. 173). The Brahmins are presented as 'the natural enemy of the Greek invader not of course on religious but on patriotic grounds' (p. 173).

The case of King Menander is interesting. For Narain, it is evident that this king was converted to Buddhism. For Tarn, nothing is less sure. The controversy covers three points:

1. The title of Menander on his bilingual coins is, in Greek, '*dikaioi*' and in the Indian language '*dharmamika*'. Starting with the Indian title, Narain notes that it is typically Buddhist ('*dharmamika*' = king of justice). Retaining the Greek title, Tarn thinks that it has its usual meaning ('just') without Buddhist connotation.
2. The spiked wheel motif on Menander's coins, for Narain, is the well-known Buddhist symbol. For Tarn, it is the wheel of the '*chakravartin*', an Indian title which is not particularly connected to Buddhism but given to any king who has claims to a universal empire.
3. The Indian work *Milindapañha*, or *Questions concerning Milinda*—the Indian transcription of Menander—who, in the text, appears as belonging to a Buddhist sect. Narain takes the text literally whereas for

Tarn, it is a legend (pp. 268–269). At the most he admits that Menander became interested in Buddhism through personal inclination or political strategy but not that he became converted to it. On the contrary, adds Tarn, the fact that Menander adopted, on some of his coins, the motif of the goddess Athena, ‘the one Greek divinity which was practically never equated with anything Oriental’ (p. 269), shows how much he wanted to champion the cause of Hellenism!

Conservatism vs. Progressism

After having wondered about the reasons for the Indo-Greek episode’s failure, Tarn concludes: ‘win or loose, succeed or fail, it is the story of a very great adventure’ (p. 413). These are the last words of the book, with just a hint of nostalgia, the nostalgia of an empire which, like all empires, was meant to last eternally.

For Narain, on the other hand, the inexorable movement of history does not create a problem: the empire, just like a living being, comes into being, reaches its climax, then dies. The titles of his book’s chapters underline this movement: (a) ‘The rise and growth...’, (b) ‘The extension...’, (c) ‘The climax ...’, (d) ‘The decline...’, (e) ‘The fall ...’. Let us remember that at the time Narain wrote his book, the British Empire was but a memory.

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It is easy to admit that ‘naïve anthropology’ determines the value judgements of the historian (was the Greek conquest positive? Was Demetrius a great king?). It is however more surprising to see the importance that it takes in the setting up of facts (kinship ties between kings, reach of a conquest, existence of Indian citizens, etc...).

One way of evading the problem is to declare that neither Tarn nor Narain were ‘good’ historians. Needless to say, I do not subscribe to this value judgement. On the contrary, both their works seem to me to be perfectly representative of the historical genre (as a matter of fact, they have been published several times, if that can be considered a criterion).

It would also be possible to accept the postulate that facts are necessarily seen through a grid of interpretation and that it would be vain to pretend to do without. It is then no longer a question of truth; history is conceived as a field where various visions of the world confront each other. It has to be constantly written and re-written.

To accept this is to send history back to its literary origins, dismissing its recent pretensions to a more scientific status. It seems to me that it is first necessary to try, through an analysis of our methods of reasoning, to understand better the ‘instrument’ that we use to reconstruct the past in order to measure the distortions that are inflicted upon it.

Book Reviews

IMRAN ALI, *The Punjab under Imperialism, 1885–1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989, 265 pp., Rs. 225.

Punjab was one of the last states to be annexed to British India. Nevertheless in a short span of time, it assumed significance with regard to the strategy of imperial rule. As has been pointed out by several researchers, this was largely due to the question of the army. Imran Ali's book stands out amongst these precisely because it goes beyond the level of general observations to actually outline the process of how this question came to assume importance. In the Canal Colonies, the region Ali studies, the imperial government undertook the exercise of settling over eleven million acres of secure agricultural land with 'colonists' who were to act as pillars of strength for a beleaguered imperial state. Ali establishes the linkages between the army and the landed classes of the province. Together, these were to determine the politics of this region as well as the policies adopted.

Ali traces how the classes supplying recruits were wooed, placated and favoured in the process of selection of colonists to be settled on this prime land. In the chapter on militarisation, Ali records the details of how the military figured prominently as a recipient of land; and how original colonisation plans were altered to accommodate these interests.

Not surprisingly, loyalty was a condition both implicit, as well as explicitly stated. The network stretched from the village upwards to the legislatures through *lamabdars*, *zaildars*, district board officials and nominees to the Provincial legislature. By and large this chain held together, in a systematic attempt to prevent Punjab from joining the nationalist mainstream. Ali argues that the state was successful in this because it enjoyed special authority in a hydraulic society! He does not, however explain or justify the use of this concept.

Undoubtedly, the long arm of imperialism, extended down to the smallest village as canal water reached the interiors. This gave the canal bureaucracy excessive control and power of interference as well as tremendous scope for mismanagement and corruption. Disaffection with British rule was, therefore, not ruled out, for colonisation set in motion a process of differentiation and classes other than the rural elite did emerge. What was their political behaviour? Ali does not address himself to this problem.

What Ali does touch upon is, however, no less interesting. He sets out to examine the British contention that Punjab was a 'beneficiary' of colonial

rule and that its experience was qualitatively different from other regions. Ali argues against this, citing his work as an instructive case study on the fortunes of a subject economy under imperialism. There can be little disagreement with him on the point that colonisation policy compromised on the professed objective of agricultural development; that the military, far from being a modernising force was indeed based on classic feudal lines with its accompaniment of service tenures. Ali rightly sees these as a "retrogressive phenomenon which consumed vast inputs of land, capital, labour and managerial effort for half a century." He holds this overriding concern for the army specifically, and protection of rural vested interests in general, responsible for the colonies not making a transition from traditional modes to modern capitalist agriculture. The social organisation of agriculture remained "tied to its traditional moorings" and its practice too, consequently, was largely "unredeemed and unprogressive", he maintains.

In this context he briefly examines the problems of production and proprietary rights. Here the handling of the problem as well as source material is quite inadequate. Ali largely relies on a few assessment reports for the Chenab Colony alone. Other assessment reports, though mentioned cursorily in the course of discussion on technological change, remain by and large unused.

This is largely because the indicators of change or development are not intensively examined and the discussion remains confined to a very quick survey of some statistics relating to crop output, rotation and adoption of new implements. Whereas the role of state policy in the context of extraction is fairly deeply probed, the question of surplus generation and appropriation is not really touched upon. Consequently one does not get a true picture of the shape of the economy as it emerged. What happened in terms of the forms of production, the trade and credit network, the returns from cultivation and, lastly, the formation of social classes? An examination of these would have only further strengthened Ali's argument that colonisation did not foster agricultural growth.

True, the colonies provided spectacular statistics in terms of expansion of cultivation and, therefore, trade. But these apart, there was an absence of any remarkable increase in yields. Meanwhile a grave imbalance arose from excessive dependence on an international market for wheat and cotton. When this market completely crashed in the twenties what impact did it have on the economy of this region? What factors contributed to the continuing high returns from land monopoly as compared to cultivation? And what was the nature of links between this region and the rest of the Punjab? These are some of the questions that arise. These aspects had tremendous bearing on the politics of this region. The preservation of patterns, "rooted in traditional practice and consciousness whose main-spring lay in semi-feudal rather than capitalistic urges" provided the backdrop

for emerging social tensions and spelt out the responses of different social groups in the unfolding political scenario. The control which the state had over the economy was matched by its manipulative strength in the politics of this region.

Ali concludes that a closer examination of the "success story" of the Punjab gives a very different picture. The book bears out the claim that it acts as a corrective to the assumption that the Punjab was a long-term beneficiary of colonial rule. Lastly, Ali is not unaware of the impact of the processes set off under imperialism. Can the lineages of authoritarianism in Pakistan be traced backwards, he asks, to the retardation of nationalism; to the retaining of loyal legislatures; to the undeniable eminence of the military and the arbitrary privileges of bureaucracy? Anyone interested in the history of the subcontinent would welcome this contribution which goes a long way in tracing the genesis of the ruling triad of landlords, the bureaucracy and the military in this region.

Indu Agnihotri

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

PETER BOOMGAARD, *Children of the Colonial State: Population Growth and Economic Development in Java, 1795-1880*, Free University Press, Amsterdam, 1989, x + 247 pp. Figures, graphs, maps, tables, appendices. No index. Price not stated.

This book, like a teenage child, is alternatively engaging and infuriating. At its best, it is a brilliant and challenging example of the fruit that may be obtained from a combination of fastidious data collection, the marshalling of a great range of evidence, penetrative and imaginative analysis and a sure grasp of the general theoretical terrain. At its worst it is petty, disorganised and self-indulgent. Fortunately, the good far outweighs the bad.

The book originated in an attempt 'to set the record straight about Java's population growth in the nineteenth century' (p. ix). It eventually grew to a ten chapter work, organised into three parts. The first provides the background of Java's political, administrative and economic structure around 1800 and the nineteenth century colonial economic policies which reshaped it. The second discusses the impact of those policies on landholding, village social structures, agricultural production and the non-agricultural sector. The third part, the heart of the book, is a heavily detailed and complex discussion of demographic determinants, leading to a painstaking reconstruction of Java's major demographic patterns through the nineteenth century.

This is a work of great industry and creativity. It is the first comprehensive and systematic statistical analysis of social and economic change in nineteenth century Java, using data collected from a huge number of divergent sources

and laboriously fortified with a wealth of descriptive information from archives, published reports, memoirs, travel accounts and such like. The labour invested in gleaning, not to mention cleaning, the data, and in its interpretation, must have been immense, and all Java scholars are in Boomgaard's debt. The book reaches its climax in its final chapters where an impressive combination of demographic technique and tight, lucid argumentation provide what may be the last word on the long-running debate on the dimensions of Java's population growth through the nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, the result of the whole is curiously unsatisfying. One reason for this is the book's dislocated nature. It seems to have sprawled far beyond its original conception and ended up as a series of more-or-less unrelated segments. Especially in the earlier parts, this unrelatedness sometimes leads to a rather pointless fact-grubbing, with snippets of information being presented, sometimes with an air of smug triumph, simply because they've been discovered. Thus, we are treated to a detailed discourse on the varieties of Javanese taxation in force around 1800 which bears no clear relevance to later discussions; similarly, the relation of much of the detailed material on village structures to the general subject matter of the book is tenuous. Much of this is no more than an elaboration of current ideas, misleadingly presented as historiographical breakthroughs. Where Boomgaard does break important new ground, especially in his chapters on agricultural production and industry where he brings to light much new information and interesting insight, he does little to provide a coherent and integrated view of the nature of social change in Java.

The difficulty presented by this lack of integration, however, is less serious than that provided by Boomgaard's governing method, which is to rely on his corrected statistical data to sustain the narrative and drive the analysis. There is, throughout, a pervading sense of 'getting the facts right', as if this will finally settle any lingering arguments. Anyone with the faintest acquaintance with Java's nineteenth century statistical legacy is aware of the conceptual and procedural problems these statistics present. In the first place, they need handling with the greatest care just to establish what they might mean. More important, so many assumptions have to be employed to make the figures talk so that they can be made to say virtually anything. Their essential purity, then, the thing which is supposed to give the account its definitiveness, is tainted from the beginning. A couple of examples of this problem might suffice to make the point. First, Boomgaard argues that income and consumption dropped sharply between 1815 and 1840, something he attributes to the operations of the early Cultivation System, and rose thereafter between 1840 and 1880. The major components of the data leading to this conclusion are production and population data for those three years. Boomgaard is, like everyone, dissatisfied with Raffles'

population figures. It is difficult to see, however, why he places such trust in the 1815 production data which even Raffles is careful to call "estimated produce", especially given the disruption caused by Raffles' policies and the fact that the premier rice producing region of easterly Java was just emerging from a century of troubles. Moreover, with regard to the 1840 data, Boomgaard apparently mistakes the rice yield figure provided in the Cultivation Report for that year, which is based on the total amount of land planted by peasants (i.e., for rice and all other domestic crops), with a yield figure based on the amount of land planted only in rice. The second example relates to the issue of nuptiality and fertility. It is an important premise of Boomgaard's demographic discussion that marriage was universal. Thus, for instance, when he plots rising rates of nuptiality, he attributes this (as he must, given this premise) to earlier age at first marriage. However, he fails to consider the possibility that these rising rates may indicate a higher proportion of people marrying. Indeed, the 1815 sample data he cites in support of his notion of earlier age at marriage might be read more simply as evidence that around 20 per cent of males did not marry at that time. Clearly, if what we are dealing with during the period of the Cultivation System is a higher proportion of people marrying (which, by the way, might say something about the possibility that the Cultivation System engendered higher levels of prosperity which, curiously, Boomgaard seems to admit from time to time (pp. 193, 197)), aspects of Boomgaard's subsequent demographic discussion might require significant adaptation.

While it is impossible to do justice to the richness of Boomgaard's analysis here, the point about both these examples is that the raw data, no matter how carefully and scientifically cleaned and corrected, are never a neutral arbiter in quite the way Boomgaard would have us believe. Structured and interpreted a certain way, according to a certain framework, they will provide a certain outcome; structured and interpreted differently, the outcome will be different. Paradoxically, however, once we strip Boomgaard's account of its proclaimed definitiveness, its value as a work of scholarship in the real sense is enhanced. His probings have given us different, better and more fertile questions rather than final answers. Whatever quibbles we may have with his style and his conclusions, he has challenged the field with a work of acute analysis and inquisitiveness which will play a major role in shaping the research agenda for many years to come.

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BHIKHU PAREKH, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, 288 pp., Rs. 190.

Bhikhu Parekh, Professor of Political Theory at the University of Hull,

attempts in this book to discover the moral and political principles on which Gandhi tried to reconstitute and revitalise the Indian, and especially the Hindu, tradition. The task Gandhi undertook was not easy. He had grown up in a society on which the hand of an entrenched priesthood lay heavily. A yawning chasm divided the tiny English-educated elite at the apex (which had been 'almost educated out of Indianness'), from the millions at the bottom of the social pyramid who were in the grip of unthinking conformism, ritualism and superstition. Efforts of several outstanding social and religious reformers in the nineteenth century, such as Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda, had met only with limited success. The British rulers of India, chastened by their experience in 1857, were reluctant to meddle with matters which even remotely touched the religious sentiments of the people. The founding fathers of the Indian National Congress concentrated on political grievances and, despite the taunts of its British critics, steered clear of the dangerous terrain of social reform; their caution seemed amply justified by the experience of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the United Provinces and of Ranade, Agarkar and Gokhale in Poona.

When Gandhi emerged on the Indian scene after the First World War, it was as a political leader, but he did not skirt social issues. He dared to throw a gauntlet to Hindu orthodoxy as well as British authority. He put social reform on the national agenda, but he was shrewd enough not to give equal emphasis to the two struggles at the same time. He stressed political issues when he launched his satyagraha campaigns against the Raj, and stressed social issues during periods of political quiescence.

Both for his political and social campaigns, Gandhi tried to reconstruct tradition so as to harness it to the cause of reform. He could do this, because, as Parekh points out, he possessed a "deep understanding of the nature and mode of discourse and structural constraints of the Hindu tradition." Gandhi had also some peculiar qualifications for this venture. His Hindu credentials were unquestionable, and thanks to his life style, he enjoyed a unique moral authority which had never been enjoyed by anyone before him. Twenty years in South Africa had widened his intellectual horizons; he had learnt to borrow creative elements from western, and especially Christian, sources to enrich his native heritage. This "cross-fertilization", as Parekh calls it, had some interesting results. For example, fasting, which had been a means of self-purification and spiritual elevation in Hindu thought, became in Gandhi's hands an act of vicarious suffering and a tool for social and political reform. Similarly, non-violence, equated with avoidance of injury to animate objects, was transformed by Gandhi into a gospel of active love dedicated to the service of fellow-beings. There were other traditional concepts, such as those of *satya*, *swaraj*, *swadeshi* and *brahmacharya* to which Gandhi imparted new meanings and, thus, made them

living ideas for his times. This transmutation of traditional concepts enabled him to make social and political campaigns intelligible to millions of people who could scarcely have been reached by an entirely new rationalist or modern terminology.

Parekh's book covers a wide area, ranging over Gandhi's views on British rule, non-violence, caste, untouchability, sex and so on. Closely reasoned, well-documented and elegantly written, these eight essays gain from the historical context in which Parekh sets them. It is difficult to do justice to them in a short review. Rarely has Gandhi been so closely examined under the microscope of a political scientist. Parekh's analysis is at once sympathetic and critical. He recapitulates Gandhi's ideas fairly and brings out their fluidity, subtlety and originality; but he is visibly baffled by the "ambiguities" and "inconsistencies" in the Mahatma's rationalisations. He complains that Gandhi's interpretation of Hindu religion and history was "highly selective", that in his interpretation of the *Gita*, he "played hide and seek with the historical method". The curious combination of conservatism and radicalism, openness and moral fervour makes Gandhi the despair of philosophers who value theories with all the loose ends tied. The fact is that Gandhi was not a philosopher or a system-builder. He was essentially a social and political reformer with a deep vein of humanism, for whom ideas were merely tools for achieving certain given ends within a certain ethical framework.

B.R. Nanda

TANIKA SARKAR, *Bengal 1928-1934: The Politics of Protest*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1987, 183 pp., Rs. 130.

Bengal politics in the early twentieth century is an area relatively well served by historians. However, most of the earlier analyses were situated within the elite discourse where power was the name of the game and ground rules were framed from above. The shadowy silhouettes of the people occasionally lurked in the background but seldom appeared to have acted independently of elite manipulations. Clearly there was the need to do for Bengal what Gyanendra Pandey has done for the U.P.

Tanika Sarkar's point of departure is 1928 when an agitational run up for a fresh bout of confrontation with the Raj was being prepared. But it is not the binary conflict between the Congress and the Raj that she seeks to analyse. The politics of protest was an amalgam of various levels wherein the worker and the peasant, the leftist and the revolutionary fought alongside the Congress, each retaining its own priorities and compulsions. A brief introduction highlights the rickety structure of agrarian society with the depression emerging as the most important phenomenon of the period.



Against this sombre background, she introduces the story of the revival of organised politics of Bengal after the death of C.R. Das. After a tediously familiar round of faction fighting—which Sarkar has done well to keep out of her ambit—Bose emerged as Bengal's own alternative to the Gandhian leadership. He was able to build up a militant agitation around the boycott in a manner that irked Gandhi. But once the agitation got going, it revealed its own limits. The deteriorating communal situation alienated the Muslims while the Swarajists' advocacy of landlord interests and Bose's equivocation on labour disputes entailed drastic reduction of its support base. The urban radicalism of Bose with a substantial *bhadralok* youth component defined the constricted social contours of the movement.

Sarkar's findings on rural Gandhians break new grounds. While the late Hitesh Ranjan Sanyal in his pioneering works had treated them as a somewhat undifferentiated whole, Sarkar harps on their variegated character showing considerable internal variations. The extremely valuable discussion on grassroot resistance especially in Chechuahat, based primarily on Home Political Proceedings, unmistakably demonstrates a breakdown of Gandhian restraint on violence. She has convincingly argued that the way the district officers and the colonial police became the object of ridicule and targets of attack, signified a major step in the political involvement and consciousness. The brute force which was the ultimate bulwark of the Raj now stood bare, stripped of the legitimising veil drawn over it so far.

Despite significant advance in the political consciousness in some spheres, the period regrettably witnessed a previsage of the communal holocaust that was to rock Bengal in the 40s. Sarkar explains the causes of the Dacca, Kishoreganj and Chittagong riots in terms of wider social and political processes. Although communal violence admittedly stemmed from a religious world view, the clear coincidence of class and communal divisions, ascribable to a peculiar configuration of property relations in Bengal, aggravated the process. She emphasises the discriminating militancy of the rioters, a point strongly contested by Sugata Bose in his study of the Kishoreganj riots. A number of somewhat disparate outbursts of popular militancy have, for the first time, received coherent and sympathetic treatment. Jitu Santal's Hinduisation movement emanated from zamindari oppression and evoked millenarian hopes. Sarkar's emphasis on the way the movement drew its sustenance from the proselytising wave of the Hindu Sabha, serves as a useful corrective to the overemphasised subaltern autonomy currently being pandered *ad nauseam*. The valuable vignettes on the workers' movement, especially on the Carters' Strike adds a refreshingly new flavour to her narrative. A brief but perceptive discussion on the role of women against the broad context of gender relations is justifiably aimed at redressing a perceived imbalance in historiography.

Viewed as a whole, *Bengal 1928-1934* is an excellent study of popular protest. It frequently moves beyond the stereotyped format of the history of the national movement and brings in the workers and peasants, women and tribals, *bhadrak* and rioters who were all involved, in varying degrees, in the politics of protest. If there is an undertone of personal engagement in her narrative, she is well aware of it. Understandably, Sarkar shares with many of her generation, an implicit faith in the viability of the Left alternative in the context of the failure of the Bengal Congress (p. 169). However, her own narrative repeatedly illustrates the failure of the Communists to properly assess the historical situation during crucial periods (pp. 75, 130, 166). She herself has identified official repression, 'iron frame of a very Stalinist frame of political understanding and a rather economist conception of mass struggle' as factors that retarded the healthy growth of the Left and the shortlived support extended by the Communists to the British war efforts during the Second World War did not, in retrospect, seem to have furthered the cause. While the Bengal Congress failed to deliver the goods, the Left became a victim of its own weaknesses. From a different perspective it might even be argued that the eventual resurgence of the Left in Bengal, at a later date, was partly due to its ability to steal the Congress's role.

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GUNTHER D. SONTHEIMER and HERMANN KULKE eds., *Hinduism Reconsidered*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1989, ix + 238 pp., Rs. 180.

This book contains the fourteen papers presented at a panel of the Ninth European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies in 1986. The papers divide into two blocks: half of them discuss the concept, meaning or definition of Hinduism or its central features and the other half present material on specific topics.

Publishing mostly unrevised papers from large conference panels is often not worthwhile as this book unfortunately demonstrates, despite its distinguished editors and several distinguished contributors. Several papers are appetisers for potentially interesting contributions, but many others are not. Probably none of them could have been accepted, as they stand, for publication by any major academic journal.

The most interesting paper is Wagle's discussion of Hindu-Muslim interactions in medieval Maharashtra, which is based on an analysis of contemporary texts, such as the Bhakti poet Eknath's debate between a Hindu and a Turk (Muslim), and Sheikh Mohammad's and Shah-Muni's

doctrinal works. Particularly fascinating is the Muslim writers' incorporation of Hindu gods into monotheistic Islam so as to represent Muslims as members of an authentic Indian tradition without, at least in their own eyes, compromising the principles of their own faith. Mallison's discussion of Isma'ili sacred songs from medieval Gujarat is a contribution on a similar topic. The symbiotic relationship between Hinduism and Islam in medieval times is a crucial field for further research and I look forward to more detailed studies from Wagle and Mallison. In the other papers on specific topics, there are a few interesting facts and observations by Vaudeville on the myth of the Govardhan hill in Braj, Thiel-Horstmann on the Dadupanth bhakti sect, Bouez on Bengali goddesses and Vertovec on Hinduism in Trinidad.

Turning to the papers about Hinduism in general, Burghart has some interesting reflections on translation, and the role of Brahmins and ascetics in particular as figures engaged in intracultural translation. However, van der Veer's polemical discussion of the concept of the ideal Brahman only reproduces a section from his monograph *Gods on Earth* (1988) and the rest of the papers are stuck in a definitional blind alley, apart from the three papers sent by Shulman (who could not attend the conference) in which he says that although 'Hinduism' is an observer's construct and a foreign term, 'none of this need bother us unduly'. But it does unduly bother von Stietencron, Frykenberg, Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi and Sontheimer. Von Stietencron rehearses the usual reasons for saying that Hinduism is not a 'religion', but imagines that the problem is solved by redefining it as a 'group of religions': Vaisnavism, Saivism, etc. This definitional sleight of hand is followed by Frykenberg's recitation of the evidence to show that Hinduism, as a systematic religion, is a modern concept, but his awful warnings about the danger of contemporary communalism seem to imply that it is all the fault of the bearers of false definitions. Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi and Sontheimer both begin like von Stietencron. The former ends by advocating a 'vague polythetic-prototype concept' that allegedly distinguishes Hinduism from Christianity and Islam, which have 'essential' elements that can define them; given that the true definition of Christianity and Islam has often been contested in war, her distinction is naïve and this completely undermines her argument about Hinduism's supposedly distinctive characteristics. Sontheimer, on the other hand, isolates five central components of Hinduism—Brahman teaching, ascetic renunciation, tribal religion, folk religion, *bhakti*—which, in effect, serve to define it, even though he is reluctant to admit that this is his purpose. Moreover, his discussion of tribal and folk religions and *bhakti* relies on a curious mixture of textual sources and ethnographic snippets, which takes little account of modern anthropological research.

If modern anthropology has discovered one thing, it is that there are no cross-cultural analytical definitions of 'religion' or 'god', or other comparable

terms like 'economics' or 'money' 'kinship' or 'family', and so on. All putative definitions fail because they are either too narrow or too broad, excluding what should sensibly be included or vice versa. Loosely descriptive—or, if you will, polythetic—definitions are the only kind that we can employ cross-culturally. To ask if Hinduism or some streams within it does or does not fit a particular definition of religion is a pointless terminological question, as it also is for Christianity, Islam or any other socio-cultural phenomenon conventionally called a religion. Of course, it is important to ask why and when, some Hindus (or other Indians) try to define Hinduism as a systematic religion or 'ism', and Frykenberg does recognise this. But the depressing question raised by several efforts to reconsider Hinduism in this book is why some scholars still think that arguing about definitions is worthwhile. The answer, I suspect, has something to do with nervous reaction to attacks on orientalism, but this book surely does not mark out a path towards renewed scholarly confidence.

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B.G. TAMASKAR, *Contributions to Historical Geography of India*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1985, xii + 217 pp., Rs. 230.

This collection of fifteen essays, of which eleven had already been published between 1958 and 1977, has been somewhat disappointing. Both thematically and chronologically, the essays are extremely disparate. While the elucidation of geographical knowledge in the Upanishads (pp. 3–13) represents one extreme of the chronological spectrum, the lower limit is reflected in the author's concern for the issues involved in the post-merger transformations in Goa in the 1960s (pp. 197–207). From the point of view of the themes included in the collection, one reads about the geographical data in the *Jātaka* tales; functional characters of *Mahārāṣṭra* cave settlements; Kautilyan theory of territorial sovereignty and geopolitics (four out of the fifteen essays are based on Kautilya); geographic genesis of Hell, sites of human settlements and related cultural features in the *Mahāśivapurāṇa* (four essays); historical geography of Malik Ambar's territory; periodic marketing system in medieval *Mahārāṣṭra* and the concept of boundaries in India through the ages.

Our disappointment is primarily on two interconnected counts: (a) limitations of the chronological frame adopted by the author and, (b) absence of any significant light on the conceptual advances made in "historical geography". We find it thoroughly inadequate to classify essays into "Ancient India" and 'Medieval India'. Since one of the major concerns of historical geography is the study of the formation of human habitats and

their interaction with environment, a distinct chronological frame ought to be seen as indispensable for understanding changes in historical geography along the chronological axis as well as the regional axis. To illustrate, the author has failed to provide any explanation for including four studies on the *Mahāśivapurāṇa* under "Medieval India". As is well known to the historians, "Medieval India" stretched for at least one thousand years (from the seventh to the seventeenth centuries) and is marked by significant changes in the socio-economic and political formations. One looks in vain for Tamaskar's justifications for the basis of this placement. Equally enigmatic is the link between the studies on the aforesaid *Purāṇa* on the one hand and the discussion of historical geography of Malik Ambar's territory on the other. Again, that the *Jātaka* stories represent an extremely vast chronological spectrum (c. 200 BC – AD 300) is well known but Tamaskar takes no cognisance of this in his effort to catalogue geographical data from these sources. Similarly, lumping Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Viśākhaḍatta's *Mudrārākṣasa* together (chapter 6) creates enormous chronological aberrations.

"Historical Geography" as a discipline has grown with a distinct focus on interdisciplinary analyses. Such areas of investigation as are concerned with the material well-being of humans, for example, agriculture, trade, urban centres, rural settlements, industries, communications, etc., arouse interests of both historians and geographers. Similarly, the identification of "regions" not just in geographical terms but also in economic, political and cultural connotations has also contributed to the widening horizon of "historical geography". Regrettably, Tamaskar's studies, barring a few exceptions (on Malik Ambar and Marketing System in Medieval Mahārāṣṭra), fall in the stereotyped and old-fashioned format focusing mostly on the compilation of data from disparate sources. To illustrate again, the author has not shown any inclination to utilise the vistas opened by archaeologists and historians such as B. Subbarāo (*The Personality of India*, 1958), B.M. Morrison (*Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*, 1970) and Y. Subbarayalu (*Political Geography of the Chola Country*, 1973). Unlike Tamaskar, these scholars have, in the last three decades (precisely when Tamaskar had got most of his studies published) gone beyond the exposition of "geographical factors in History" or the listing of "geographical data". Instead, they have shown meticulous awareness of spatial and chronological contexts of historical analyses and that too without restricting themselves to "political" regions. One would have expected that when the author was endeavouring to bring out his earlier publications in a "new format" after decades of their original publications, taking due cognisance of new vistas would have been *sine qua non*. It has not been so. Even in studies based on Kautilya, Tamaskar's contributions do not offer any fresh insight. Most of the ideas camouflaged in concepts such as "geo-politics"

and "territorial sovereignty" have been written about at great length in practically all studies on ancient Indian polity.

Finally, work dealing with historical geography is expected to carry meaningful maps. Unfortunately, most of the nine maps are badly reproduced. The map on "Mahārāṣṭra Caves" (p. 39), for example, is almost illegible.

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE UNORGANISED SECTOR

A Study of the Labour Process

MANJIT SINGH

The term 'unorganised sector' is widely used in current discussions on Indian industrial scenario. However, it still suffers from a great deal of conceptual confusion. The purpose of this study is to clear part of this confusion by studying the labour process in the unorganised sector through a detailed case study. Dr Manjit Singh maintains that in order to arrive at a meaningful definition it is necessary to trace the history of the various forms of industrial capital and to place the sector in the overall social relations of production.

This book providing as it does a framework for the conceptual redefinition of the 'unorganised sector' will appeal to sociologists, economists, industrialists and trade unionists.

220 x 140mm/1990/232 pp



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